KW
데뷔 못 하면
죽는 병 걸림
백덕수 현대 판타지 장편소설

DEBUT OR DIE

– 데못죽 –

- VOLUME 1 -

-AUTHOR-
백덕수

-ILLUSTRATOR-
텡

[READHIVE]

– STORY –

A student who was preparing the Civil Service examination for 4th year, suddenly he found himself in an unfamiliar body 3 years ago.

As well as a status window displaying a threat in front of his eyes!
[Outbreak!] [Status Abnormality: ‘Debut or Death’ Occurs!] A diary about the transformation of the main character, who was suddenly challenged to be an idol even though he has never been in the industry before due to sudden threat of death.

※Speciality: He used to take and sell idol’s data.

– GENRE –

Comedy Drama Fantasy

CHAPTER 1

Isn't it the constitution that it's a different world when you open your eyes and see an unfamiliar ceiling?

But it wasn't. I woke up in some moldy motel room.

"Ugh—"

It felt like my head was going to break. I grabbed my forehead and got up. The musty-smelling blanket fell under my feet.

So—let's see, after confirming that I failed the test again, I think I fell asleep while drinking alone.

Does this mean that I roll in from my studio room to the motel?

"I'm going crazy…"

I cursed at myself and went into the bathroom. I thought I should get some water and check out my appearance as well. I'm sure I look like a drunk student studying for the civil service exam, even though I'm not looking at it.

And I fell down when I looked in the mirror.

"Ugh!—Fuck."

I couldn't believe the situation and gritted my teeth while reflexively swearing.

I brushed my hair with trembling hands. Then I looked in the mirror again.

I could still see an unfamiliar face in the mirror.

There is a skinny, fine little boy.

…I held my breath to keep myself from panicking. I had already quit, yet I found myself longing for a cigarette.

"…Whoo."

It was then that I realized that even the voice was unfamiliar.

I feel like biting my tongue.

What the hell's going on here?

I barely came to my senses and led the unfamiliar body to search the motel room.

I found a note in the bed that looked like a suicide note and an empty medicine box. This guy must have tried to kill himself by taking sleeping pills.

When I read the contents of the suicide note roughly, the content was that he was an orphan who dropped out of school; he died because he felt depressed and hopeless.

My mouth felt bitter for no reason. Why am I still an orphan while having changed my body?

I also found a wallet that was lying on a cheap dressing table. I looked around and found some bills and this body's ID card.

[Park Moondae 0X1215 – 3XXXXXX]

"The last digit is 3…"

He was young. I looked at the photo on my ID card after I said it. It was better than the appearance I saw in the mirror earlier, but my face was dark.

Still, he looked young with a handsome face, considering he had a dark impression. Is he 23 years old now? I thought he'd be younger.

"…"

No, this is not the time to think about this.

I tried to think calmly.

Anyway, I calmed down by roughly grasping the situation. I think I should slowly find my original body's whereabouts and come up with countermeasures. I don't know if this guy who tried to commit suicide got into my body.

I took my wallet and opened the motel door.

And I hardened.

In front of my eyes, snow was falling from the window.

…It was July before I got drunk.

"Oh my."

I swallowed my saliva. Then I rushed back inside the motel room and lifted the calendar on the desk.

[202X December]

—This is a calendar from 3 years ago.

My vision became dizzy.

It didn't take that long to calm down again. That— because it was more shocking to me to change my body than to come to the past.

I sat on the bed and sighed. I don't even remember the lottery number. Why.

Then I raised my head at the flash of nonsense.

…In fact, it could be a different world, not the past.

It was a crazy idea, but it seemed convincing because I was overwhelmed by the crazy situation.

This seems to happen very often in the webtoons and web novels I searched for. Was it called hunter…?

I murmured a little blankly. I'm sure it seemed pretty insufficient.

"Status window…?"

Of course, nothing happened.

Damn it.

I hit the bed with my hand in shame.

There's no way, you idiot—.

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level : 0

Title: None

Vocal: C

Dance: –

Visual: C

Talent: –

Characteristics: Infinite potential

It's open?

I fell out of bed.

"Ugh!"

I thought as I groaned in pain in my back.

The content of the status window is— not what I expected?

* * *

"…"

By opening the status window, I could calm myself down as much as I wanted.

It's definitely a situation that ignores the laws of physics. But I can feel that this is not a joke.

Now, I'm out of the motel and in a nearby PC room. This is because I need to find out if there are other variables besides the fact that this world was 3 years ago.

For reference, I asked the counter to call my original number, but it said that the number was not available.

I couldn't log in to the university account, and the SNS account created for the assignment also disappeared.

In other words, there seems to be no 'me' in the world.

Well, there's no such thing as a lingering feeling.

My parents had already died in an accident when I was in middle school, and by the time I entered college, all of my relatives had lost contact with me.

There were no good personal connections, and any human relationships that existed disappeared as the preparation for the civil service exam grew longer.

Moreover, if I think of the time I had wasted as a student preparing for the civil service exam, it means that even if I quit, there'll be nothing weird with it.

"The Ham Ramyeon you ordered."

"Ah, thank you."

I calmly evaluated myself and received a tray. And I looked at the search engine while slurping ramyeon in my mouth.

Well, it was 3 years ago that I set up a "full-scale study" for quite some time.

These sites are not very familiar to me because it was the time when I canceled my smartphone and cut off the internet.

But I didn't feel out of place.

It feels exactly like 3 years ago. Things that were popular at that time stand out. Games, movies, songs—Idol.

Idols.

"Hmm."

When I finished eating, I put the chopsticks in the ramyeon bowl, and I crossed my arms.

The contents of the status window were specific to idols, no matter how I looked at it.

I don't know why I came into this body, but is it related to the contents of the status window?

Did the original owner of this body, 'Park Moondae,' want to be an 'aspiring idol'?

—Or is it because of my college days?

I don't know at all. But I should use what is available.

"Status window."

As I mumbled softly, almost only with the sound of my breath, another translucent status window popped up in my sight.

My vocal is a grade C, and my visual is also a grade C. The rest are blank.

Is it because I haven't tried it?

The idea suddenly came to my mind, but I decided to put it off for now. There was no way I wanted to show off my dancing and talent right now in this situation.

Then, should I check the status window for other content?

I remembered the karaoke sign I saw while entering the PC room.

* * *

"Oh."

First of all, speaking of the confirmation results, grade C doesn't seem to be a low grade.

I could sing very well. First of all, the tone was good, and the volume of the voice was good. Since the vocalizations were also clear, I would say that it feels like *'the basics are good.'* I definitely thought I had talent.

And what's even more surprising is that this window pops up.

[Achievement accomplished! <First attempt>]

Level 0 -〉 1

You have obtained 1 point!

"Achievements?"

I was just asking myself, but another window popped up.

[Achievements in Progress]

10 attempts (0/10)

100 attempts (0/100)

1st experience (0/1)

10 experiences (0/10)

……

The scroll bar continued to endlessly the bottom—it's hard work. Even the units are becoming more irrationally so. Besides, half of them are blank, so it's impossible to check.

I got a little idea about it, so I turned off the window.

Still, since I earned a point, should I use it like in a game?

I called out the status window.

'Remaining points: 1' was newly displayed at the bottom.

"Distribute 1 point to Vocal."

Then the contents of the status window changed.

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level: 1

Title: None

Vocal: C+

Dance: –

Visual: C

Talent: –

Characteristics: Infinite potential

Vocal becomes a C+ right away.

Is this really reflected?

I immediately chose the song I sang earlier again. And I sang it the same way.

"…I'm doing good?"

There was definitely a difference. It was easier to hear, and the sounds were more refined. It's as if my throat has learned how to sing it that way.

And "Characteristics" in the status window.

"The infinite potential."

Ordinary people's performance depends on their natural talent compared to their efforts. There is also a limit to how many times you can try. The maximum possible growth, the limit of potential.

But now, this window shows that it is ridiculously high efficiency for effort and that there is no growth limit.

Besides, I confirmed that my skills were actually improving.

I thought, stroking my chin.

Idols—.

Does it mean I should pursue a new career path with this body?

At that moment, a pop-up appeared on the status window.

"…!!"

[Outbreak!]

Status Abnormality: 'Debut or Die'!

Text lines continued beneath the red text.

['Debut or Die']

If you don't debut as an idol within the time limit, you will die.

Remaining period: D-365

"What?"

The content was ridiculous, but I had an ominous feeling.

It's already crazy that I'm in someone else's body, but there's no guarantee that nothing more strange will happen.

As soon as I finished reading, the weird pop-up disappeared.

And, sure enough, a strange entry was added to the status window.

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level: 1

Title: None

Vocals: C+

Dance: –

Visuals: C

Talent: –

Characteristic: Infinite potential

!Status abnormality: Debut or die

Is this real?

"Fuck—"

I spit out cursing and covered my forehead. A cold sweat broke out.

I had already confirmed the existence of the status window. So it was impossible to ignore the possibility that even this shitty phrase would come true.

Why the hell did this pop out? Because I think of idols?

I burst out laughing. But at the same time, I also had this thought.

'…It can't be. Did I get punished for taking pictures and selling data of idols?'

Yeah, idols.

In fact, it was a familiar field due to personal reasons.

This is because when I was in college, I took pictures of idols on behalf of them and made decent living expenses. In the process—I've also had dirty tastes for money.

I've seen all sorts of things and heard all sorts of rumors.

Besides, the environment makes people; as I moved around and went to take pictures, I unnecessarily immersed myself in this field.

I was able to study this and that voluntarily at that time, so it is an area where I am well versed.

I wiped the cold sweat away from my face. Then I crossed my arms and looked at the status window.

I don't know what was what. It was ridiculous, and I'm angry.

But I have no intention of dying.

So let's stay calm.

Yeah, it's a waste of life anyway, but it would give me a fresh start. And on such favorable terms.

Besides, if I want to track the reason I entered this body, I'll have to use this unrealistic status window more and check it out.

"Hmm."

Self-rationalization has been completed. I grinned with a sour smile.

…Around this time, an idol survival program was a huge hit, wasn't it?

CHAPTER 2

'Idol Joint-Stock Company.'

It is a survival entertainment series that was popular at this time of year.

Following the success of the audition, in which dozens or hundreds of aspiring idols were gathered and eliminated by vote, there were other programs that followed the format.

This 'Idol Joint-Stock Company' was also one of those mass-produced programs, but there was a reason why it became particularly famous.

Because it has gotten more vicious toward capitalism.

First, let's look at the for season 1.

[Your idol stock that grows as much as you purchase!]

Yeah. It means that you can vote in the name of 'stock' as much as you spend money.

The program was in Season 3 this year.

For some reason, after Season 2 completely collapsed, they treated the season as if it had never existed and came out with the aspiration title "Re-listed."

Thanks to this, there were many people who ridiculed, saying that Season 3 repeated far from enough and it'll go doom.

…What about me? I didn't have any thoughts about it because I was preparing for the exam.

Anyway, contrary to people's expectations, Season 3 has been a huge success.

Although there is a lot of controversy and criticism, it produces male idols who become hot topics, gain viewer ratings, draws 80,000 users to the music site's entry, and sell 600,000 album copies in the first week.

So I'm going to go on this program, too.

Today I'm taking the first step.

"Yes, we are done! I didn't trim the side too much, as you asked."

"Yes, thank you."

Now I've got a good look at myself. I thought while looking at my well-cut hair in the mirror at the salon.

I think eating well and sleeping well during the past few days affected me since the gloomy feeling of depression had already disappeared. Thanks to that, I was able to trim my messy bangs and expose my forehead.

Just in time, a middle-aged woman who was getting a perm next to me gave lip service.

"Oh my, student, you look so good~ You've gotten taller!"

I thanked her and proceeded to the counter to pay with cash.

'It's a relief that I had some money in my account when I went to the bank to check it out.'

Looking at the details, it seems that he didn't use it since it was his parent's insurance money; I feel sorry, but I need to use it.

'...Should I fill up the interest and donate it to a child welfare organization if I make money?'

It was a bit bitter. I took off the certified copy and did some research while opening the mobile phone, but it seems that the suicide of this 'Park Moondae' wasn't even an impulsive act.

His room was taken out (I barely received a deposit because the monthly rent was delayed), and the phone was canceled.

Even on his birthday.

He must have really wanted to die.

…Well, I understand because I was like that, too.

'I hope you're in a good place.'

I completed my thoughts and paid a brief silent tribute. Then I opened the hair salon door right away and walked out. It was close to noon, and the sun pierced my eyes.

There was still a lot of work to be done before I achieved my goal of going out.

'First, let's be sure of it.'

I already know everything about the program's mission, debut members, twists, and theme songs.

Of course, the details did slip a little when preparing for the announcement, but it was impossible to find a better entryway to a successful life than this.

Because if I just make it to the second round, I will be able to attract the attention of any small or medium-sized agency due to the program's success.

However, the only problem is that the public auditions for this season's participants are already over.

But I knew a few hints. And I plan to make use of it.

My goal is to be a participant in the survival program, for which the public audition session has ended.

Within a week.

Not at the broadcasting station, but at the karaoke room around here.

* * *

-IJC? Ah, Idol Joint-Stock Company. One of the writer there is a real crazy person.

This is the bullshit said by a certain guy in the back of the photography club.

He said he heard it from a relative who went to a broadcasting station, and he was a guy who spread rumors about this and that, so I didn't like him very much.

-I heard they're recruiting participants at karaoke rooms. The broadcasting station—you know, Sung X neighbors? I heard they cast an ordinary person in a karaoke room, and the PD broke it. Just saying that she didn't have enough time. Isn't she a complete idiot?

After that, that punk couldn't stop talking about the casting.

It's common to gossip during a drinking party, but it's rare to find someone who speaks about boring topics at a drinking party.

'Who was it that invited this moron?'

'Let's not invite him anymore.'

'Yeah.'

People chatted with their bitter eyes.

Of course, I didn't believe this bullshit either. I was just focusing on free drinks.

But surprisingly, there was someone who did cross-validation.

-The ordinary person who was being cast is Lee Goyoon.

-… Huh?

Lee Goyoon is a female idol who debuted in season 1. She gained popularity for her bright, cheerful, and bold image with an amusing accent and her pure appearance.

There was a moderate exclamation around.

-Whoa, she's the kid that made her debut, right?

-Yes.

-Oh… how did you know?

She spoke calmly as a senior in the journalism and broadcasting department who was about to graduate.

-That 'stupid bitch' is my older sister.

The punk who had been talking was at a loss for words at that moment.

Interestingly, contempt poured down on him from all sides.

-… Ah, haha. No, that expression is a bit.

-But, she has never been scolded by the PD. Instead, she gets paid more.

-…

After that, he shut his mouth and sat quietly.

Thanks to it, I was able to enjoy drinking comfortably. I think I just drank Somaek while listening to the senior talk about the casting. (t/n: Somaek is a beer cocktail made with soju and beer.)

Anyway, it was quite a fun situation, so it was memorable.

They said they would go around karaoke places near the broadcasting company for roughly a week after the audition if the number of people they liked in the audition for survival participants were below the quota.

-Isn't it better for kids who do things like street karaoke? It is also convenient to cast.

-I heard that there are already a lot of aspiring singers there, so they avoid it. I heard that the reason why they want to cast ordinary people is because they need a fresh character, unlike a survival participant.

It means that they are not trying to choose participants who can debut but rather to add fun to the show by casting ordinary people who are completely unaware of the situation.

These days, all aspiring idols will be educated at the agency so that they don't talk recklessly.

In the end, it also means that the ordinary people who become participants may be sacrificed for the fun of broadcasting.

'Of course, that's not what's important right now.'

What's important is that there's a high probability that the Writer is still using this method in season 3.

'It's difficult to let go once you've succeeded.'

Maybe because season 2 was ruined and the preliminary audition didn't get better, she's working harder now.

So let's think objectively.

This 'Park Moondae' body is skinny, but he has a handsome face and good height.

In addition, he's good at singing, so once we meet, there's definitely a chance that they'll give it a try.

Besides—.

'I have to raise my level.'

I had to invest in stats to achieve practice achievements. Wouldn't they try to pick them out if there was something special?

I grabbed the microphone and chose a song. And then, I glanced back at the door to the karaoke room where I came in.

The door was made of glass.

It was intended to give the 10s and 20s a bright and open atmosphere, but at the same time, the interior is nice to look at from the outside.

That's why I chose this karaoke room.

The person I was looking for was a Writer who worked at a broadcasting station.

If she has to go out and observe ordinary people while preparing for the program, she will likely choose a place close to the broadcasting station and easy to see.

So this karaoke room is the best choice now.

Without hesitation, I chose ten songs in advance and started singing.

* * *

[Achievement accomplished! <10 attempts>]

Level 1 -〉 2

You have obtained 1 point!

It was not long before I achieved one accomplishment. It's an achievement to sing 10 songs. Of course, I knew I would achieve it because it was the easiest thing to do.

I invested the point in Vocal once more. So C+ is changed to B-.

The basics seemed better this time when I sang the same song one more time to test it.

The tone color became deeper, and the volume increased. Perhaps this is how the alphabet affects growth.

At this speed, I think I could raise my ability incredibly fast in the beginning, but now I have something to focus on first.

“Oh, I’m this kind of person.”

I didn’t expect to get cast this soon.

It started a little early when I roughly calculated the timing, but it was an unexpected first point.

I accepted the business card from the woman with glasses.

The woman looked tired, but her voice was purposefully bright.

She seemed to be trying to impress me, and I seemed to have succeeded in piquing her interest as expected.

The name I was expecting was written on the business card.

[Ryu Seorin]

The senior’s name, who was in the Department of Journalism and Broadcasting, was ‘Ryu Seojin.’

‘It seems to be a sister’s name just by looking at it.’

“What’s your name, Student?”

“My name is Park Moondae.”

“You have a unique name, too. Think about it carefully. I think Student has star quality. Our program is really good at finding people with star quality.”

“…Thank you.”

I didn’t bother pretending to be happy. If I look too interested, I may seem to be aiming for this situation.

Usually, it's all caught in the preliminary profile, but they'll want to skip those who aim for it.

Perhaps it was a good approach, the woman continued.

"Student, you have a handsome face and are good at singing. I think you'll do really well if you come out of our program—. Hmm, do you want to go and take a test video today?"

"What?"

The woman was pushing a little bit as if she wanted to complete the verification in one go.

"Yes. Please contact your parents. They would be happy if you told them that their son had been cast in a TV show and would be visiting a broadcasting station."

"…I don't have parents."

When I said that, a small light sprang in the eyes of this woman, who I believed to be the Writer.

It seems to have been judged as provocative material.

After all, selling a story is an essential element in a survival show. It's even better to be criticized for squeezing the juice.

I don't know if they will use it on purpose, but it's a waste to miss it.

However, the writer quickly hid her expression. And she said it more softly as if she was sorry.

"Oh my… I'm sorry. I shouldn't have said that."

"That's all right."

"What I mean is, consider it as you come to watch a broadcasting station comfortably. It's not something you can experience often~."

“…Hmm.”

Should I say yes right now?

I paused for a moment as if hesitating, then nodded slowly. Then, the woman’s face brightens.

“Oh, you made the right decision! We’re right in front of the broadcasting station!”

So that’s how I achieved my first goal.

It was a better start than expected.

CHAPTER 3

There was nothing special at the broadcasting station I visited after almost being dragged there by the writer. It was because I only had a casual interview in front of the camera.

They didn't ask me to dance, which should have been a formality. Of course, I didn't get any advice on going to a dance academy either.

It was also proof that the role I was supposed to play was clear.

Well, it doesn't matter. The important thing is that I got my name on the participant list.

However, there were some unexpected elements.

The first recording date was much closer than I expected.

"…In ten days?"

"That's right. Park Moondae-gun was the last one to join. We don't usually get a position like this, but you got really lucky~ Moondae-gun, you got this position because you're really good." (t/n: 군 (gun) means an honorific for an unmarried younger man)

She's certainly good at putting it nicely into words.

Even though I was perplexed, I thought indifferently.

It doesn't cost anything to trim the words a bit, so it was worth it to do whatever it takes.

Of course, if they discover nothing special in me after waiting and watching, they will change abruptly.

As much as this neighborhood, there will also be very few fields where people loss cut quickly.

Besides, it is an unrealistic request to prepare the filming and evaluation song in 10 days without giving any advice to the ordinary person.

They said it casually as if it were nothing, but if they had been a participant with an entertainment company, the company might have complained.

Whether it's a re-arrangement or Nabal, they're telling us to just use the instrumental and get cursed at. It will be edited out if it isn't enough to get criticized. (Nabal (나발) is a long, straight brass horn used in Korean traditional music.)

But I expected this much.

"…Yes. Thank you."

I nodded as if I hadn't noticed anything, but I was still nervous about the filming date that was right in front of me.

The writer's face lit up with satisfaction.

"We are the ones who are grateful~ Then I will contact you for more details."

It was like asking me to leave. I left the broadcasting station without regret and made plans for the next 10 days.

Since the preparation time was short, it seemed that I'd have to use a more extreme method than I had planned.

* * *

The first day of filming came after 10 busy days had passed.

Although it is a natural structure of the survival program, it begins with evaluating each participant.

The 1st round of evaluation.

Anyone who has seen an idol survival program at least once will roughly guess, but it is not rare for the bad impression to last until the end of the program.

So, if the participant doesn't have anything that stands out, the worst thing to do is to give an average performance.

Instead, if it's completely ruined and becomes a joke, they may add a story in the future, depending on the editing direction. However, it can't be helped if it's edited out without revealing any particular characteristics here.

Of course, I'm not saying that I aim to be criticized by the viewers.

"Do you remember your number? You're called by the number. Please enter this corridor after you receive instructions~"

The filming began by taking a picture of the participants walking through the hall of the set one by one.

It must have been created for the purpose of putting it in the teaser, but the filming time used for that 40-second video has already been over 2 hours.

Probably because there were only 77 participants.

'They're just innocent kids.'

After I glanced around at each and everyone who was sitting scattered in the empty space of the set, which is embarrassing even to call it a waiting room, I lost a bit of motivation.

Even though it's a status window and a regression, I realized that it's now embarrassing to try to become an idol among these children.

"Excuse me, hello."

One of the kids who keeps coming over to talk here and there was also talking to me.

I don't know if this guy is excited or just trying to break the ice in this situation.

What matters is that he seemed to be a middle school student.

So, at this age, I'm introducing myself to middle school students in order to create social connections—.

"Did you apply by yourself?"

"Yes."

"Wow, me too. Oh, by any chance, how old are you…?"

"…Twenty."

When I tried to cheat my age by 9 years, my mouth became itchy, but I felt good.

"Do you have an agency?"

"No. I don't have one."

"Ah, that's right! Usually, in IJC, there are some cases when the agency comes out and appears. What company were you originally from—"

"I haven't had one since the beginning."

"Oh… I see."

Immediately, the middle school brat suddenly lost his sincerity. Then, after roughly finishing his words, he left to speak to another person.

He's a person who already knows a lot about society and wants to succeed. Of course, he has to hide what's going through his head in front of the camera, but that's all up to him.

Anyway, I can't believe a middle school student could be that vicious.

This time, I wondered if I had made a foolish decision because I was caught up in an unrealistic situation. But the water had already been spilled.

"Let's move the set!"

This is because filming for the main broadcast has finally begun.

I followed the middle and high school students moving in groups like meerkats.

They called me around the early middle of the session.

* * *

“Participant Lee Sejin B… in 15th place! Please take a seat.”

“Thank you!”

One of the participants who was being evaluated nodded in response to the MC’s words.

He was one of four participants that were grouped and evaluated together since they were from the same agency, and he was someone who was worthy of being saved, but the production team wasn’t comfortable.

‘It’s extreme.’

Writer Ryu Seorin, who was spinning her pen, frowned.

Season 3 has received fewer investors than the previous season. It was very natural. Because season 2 was ruined, and the season barely started again. With a funny title such as ‘Re-listed,’ the production team was determined to get rid of the shadow of season 2.

However, even if they tried to hide it through personal connections and plans, there were some parts that were visible.

One of them was the talent pool.

Many candidates with a moderate level of training were exposed to other audition programs.

They filled the apparently pretty decent ones to fit 77 participants, and the proportion of ‘good for nothing’ participants increased.

And there was a limit to how much fun they could have with editing if there were too many useless guys.

It was almost impossible to send a talentless person to a Korean audition program. Even after wrapping up a person who doesn't have talent by any means, even if it got wrenched just a little bit, they would pour out all kinds of talks.

It's not about someone being hated, but the keywords 'boring' and 'fraud' will be at its center.

Fortunately, they filled the number of first-team participants that they had chosen with debut tickets, but it was not difficult to run the program without a dark horse up to that point.

'The same goes for the one coming out now.'

This time, the participant to be evaluated was a beginner who joined with only 10 days till the first filming.

One of the participants drove under the influence of alcohol at the last minute, and he was recruited in a hurry, so there were no expectations for him.

'His name… What is it? Well, he will say his name when being evaluated.'

That participant's voice was moderately good, his appearance was not bad either, and he had a story to tell in case of emergency.

Thanks to this, she jumped over her limit, which had been lowered by urgency.

However, even if she combined all of the skills, he would still be better than the average person filling a vacancy.

'Well… He could be used for comparison.'

The judges were also chatting with an unimpressed look after flipping through documents that had nothing special other than family history.

So she felt the same way.

'Yeah, just be really bad. And attract people's attention.'

If someone who roughly fits the standard continues to appear, they will become sick of it, but if a few people are really bad, they'll add to the richness of the program. Like a famous quote, being mocked is also a sort of attention.

Anyway, because the ordinary person only had 10 days to prepare it, there was a high possibility that it wasn't funny enough.

She glanced at the stage with weak expectations.

"Next participant, please enter the stage!"

The ordinary participant then comes up to the stage.

Fortunately, he looked more handsome than before, as if he had properly visited a fine salon.

The problem was that the atmosphere was dull, gloomy, and mysterious.

She thought it was because of the family history the last time, but is he going to act like that again in front of all these cameras?

In fact, it was because he had seen the camera flash numerous times before, but the writer, who had no way of knowing, was perplexed.

'…Is he the type that doesn't show that he's nervous?'

Anyway, it didn't matter. Then he can get the image of being arrogant when he's not good at it. The writer uses her brain with enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, Park Moondae, who came up to the stage, listened to the MC.

"Yes. Participant. Please introduce yourself."

"…My name is Park Moondae. Please take good care of me."

Then he bowed his head. Then, there is a small laugh and snort from the judge's seat.

“No, is that all?”

A male judge holding the microphone asked in a voice mixed with laughter.

It was a tone with a serious negative tone. It must have meant that he wasn’t speaking properly, but Park Moondae nodded seriously.

“Yes. I have no experience to introduce.”

Then, laughter broke out in the judges’ seats.

“Phew, what a unique friend!”

“He’s fun~.”

A few of them whispered. Of course, the microphone captured their voices well.

“Ah, there really is nothing in the application form here.”

“That’s right.”

It’s time to make remarks like, ‘Then why did you participate?’ to suddenly appear. However, the judges all moderately hid their laughter as they thought it would be more impressive to do it after the stage.

And the writers thought, There could be some useful cuts.

“Then let’s take a look at your performance.”

“Yes.”

Despite their vicious interest, the participant accepted the microphone handed to him by the staff.

The interlude soon began to flow.

And everyone was bewildered.

Why did this song come out here?

CHAPTER 4

“Huh?”

Several of the judges began to talk in whispers.

“T-Holic?”

T-Holic, a famous boyband that won the Daesang award for three consecutive years, went on hiatus a few years ago. It was because of the unavoidable situation in which the majority of the members were enlisting in the military. (t/n : The Daesang award is one of the highest achievements a group or artist can achieve)

So instead, the agency pushed for the solo career of the youngest main vocalist, who has yet to be drafted. It was a mini-album featuring a great title song with a strong chorus.

However, time has revealed that the true value of this album was not the title track, but the sidetrack.

Surprisingly, it climbed to #3 on the music charts.

The wave, which began with a recommendation post from a popular female solo singer, grew into a small wave after passing through various entertainment shows.

The side track is 〈PARTY IN ME〉.

The easy-listening song, which blends the rich band sound with sophisticated synths, was performed at a lot of college festivals that year and finally landed in the top 100.

And what’s flowing in the studio right now is certainly the prelude.

It was an iconic intro accompaniment with a unique accordion-style chorus melody.

Of course, it was a masterpiece. If this song is performed well, it will leave a strong impression.

So that was even weirder.

'This… How can you choose a song without knowing what it is?'

This is because the song's position is very vague.

It's not a representative song of a famous idol's prime time, nor is it a famous song by an established singer either.

Therefore, whether in idol survival or singer survival, it was not a song that could be remembered and chosen on the first evaluation.

This is because the song missed the point in both categories.

Besides, the song had been popular for some time at this point.

And when she didn't choose a song specifically for him since she thought an obvious song would come out, something like this happened.

Of course, the production team was able to check the sound source submitted by the participants in advance. However, there were 77 participants.

The problem was that it was not worth the time to replace the songs one by one.

'It's difficult to compare and edit these vague songs—.'

The Writer hit her pen dissatisfiedly.

Even the judges, who were surprised by the song's selection, were waiting for the prelude to end with a slightly casual attitude.

And Park Moondae opened his mouth.

I remember the 'me' I used to know

Beyond the shining and dazzling seasons

Until the days of tiredness and weakness

Even at the end of the endless days

The thing that captures the broken me, oh—.

Only me

Yeah, It's me

"…!"

It's good.

It was clean from the first verse, which started offbeat and continued as if reciting.

Many people don't know about it because it sounds good to the ear, but it was simple to sing this song because it missed all the delicate beats.

It means to sound amateurish.

However, this participant was meticulously putting the smallest melodies into each complex beat.

'Dan, Da-dan–, Ddan, Dan, Da-an–, Da-dan.'

"…!"

One of the judges was surprised after unintentionally hitting the table. It entered at the exact right time.

In this way, even ordinary viewers who don't know the details of the half-beats get the impression that he's singing well because it is sung perfectly to suit the accompaniment. (t/n : Accompaniment (伴奏) is to play another instrument next to a song or instrumental music.)

Besides—.

‘The vocalization… is good?’

The vocalization was remarkably good. It’s not just sonorous, but it also has a good and solid tone.

‘Was he like this at karaoke?’

The Writer recalled the song she heard when she first met, but it didn’t seem to be this much. He would have received more interviews if he had sung it like this when she invited him. And she’ll take a look at the song choices.

‘Then, did you get this much better in 10 days?’

Regardless of how perplexed the Writer was, the song went through the verse and entered the pre-chorus.

That’s why, I

I have to memorialize myself

I must never forget again

Now, remember

Until now

Even though the sound was rising like an escalator, it never became flat. There was no part where breathing was unnatural.

At this point, the Writer also noticed something else—for example, the judges’ surprised faces.

I’ve always lived today

With an amazing miracle

Don’t forget. Don’t erase

So congratulations

Memorialize this moment

That's the party in me

As if every day is a PARTY, Ooh-let's PARTY

The high notes stretch out. It doesn't even look too much. It is easy and clean, as if there's only one octave left for him to hit.

He sang it like he was talking instead of shouting, which was a perfect technique for the song that needed to be heard beautifully.

Now, the Writer just wants to laugh more.

'Yeah, that's great… He has a main vocal feeling… Still, we lacked a vocal position, but wow, isn't that a good thing? I have a really great eye. I can't believe this kind of thing rolled in even if I cast him on the street.'

The second verse came out again.

The melody was the same as in the first verse, but Park Moondae quickly learned how to deal with the different beats.

After passing the bridge, the voice rose naturally from the last chorus to the transition.

A high-pitched sound that thrills the back of the neck gives a pleasant sensation. It wasn't excessive, but it also wasn't rushed; it was a wonderful climax.

And as if talking again, the song ended with the first bar of the verse.

…I remember the 'me' I used to know

The participant sings beautifully till the very last note.

Park Moondae bowed his head as soon as the music ended. Then he adds his words, a little blankly.

"…Thank you for listening."

There was a brief silence. The Writer gripped her pen tightly.

'Yeah, let's keep it instead of throw it away.'

The judges excitedly picked up the microphone as she changed Park Moondae's position.

"Wow, Moondae-ssi!"

"Yes."

"You know you did a good job, right!!?"

"…I practiced hard to sing well."

The other judges then quickly added.

"No, you're just born with it. You have a talent."

He was a choreographer known for his straightforwardness. He smiles to the point that his eyes narrow as if he likes it.

Because it's a broadcast, there may be some exaggerated words on purpose, but he wasn't the type of person to say things he didn't like.

Park Moondae bowed his head, screaming with happiness inwardly.

The judges continued to shower him with praise.

Mudie, a female solo singer who appeared as a vocal coach, praised him with shining eyes in particular.

"First of all, your voice is very refreshing. And I can hear it better because you have good vocalization."

"I know, right? It's like someone talking right next to your ear—"

"Right, that's right."

Their voices of agreement are overwhelming. Mudie then nodded and continued in a quick voice.

“Again, I don’t think your voice suits the genre well, but this is an extremely important part for an idol, you know? You don’t have any bad singing habits, and I’m looking forward to the future. Really.”

“Thank you.”

“Moondae-ssi, you’ve never joined an agency before, right? You said you don’t have any experience before, but looking at it here, you really don’t have a lot of experience.”

“Yes. Not yet…”

Then a young male judge comes in. He’s a famous boy group member that lost two members during the contract renewal time.

“Then did you never take any special lessons?”

“Yes.”

“Not at all? In the academy?”

Park Moondae silently shook his head.

The judge who asked the question was impressed with a somewhat doubtful expression. Mudie then smiled brightly and opened her mouth once again.

“Yeah, it might be better to wait for the best one than to just do it with a random entertainment company. I’m sure the offer will come from a good place! “

“Thank you for your kind words.”

The Writer suddenly remembered that Mudie’s agency was preparing to launch a male idol.

‘Now that I think about it, she had a share in her entertainment company.’

And she looked at the participant, who was still politely nodding his head, but it looked like she didn't get any amazing impression.

Then, when she saw the judges' seats, which were covered with praise, she was overwhelmed with a strange feeling.

It's like… something had shattered.

Obviously, finding talented participants for the broadcast would have been advantageous, but she feels unpleasant.

After seeing Park Moondae's hand microphone while resting her chin on her hand, the Writer immediately remembered.

'He didn't dance properly after all!'

Of course, Park Moondae also did the same choreography.

However, because this song wasn't made for a promotion, the movement was limited to simple dance moves.

When the dancers surrounding them performed the proper choreography, their hands were set to stretch out in time with the beat and move their legs a few times.

However, the original stage, which included dancers, stayed in people's minds as an afterimage.

The dancers surrounding him can be filled in at random with the thought, "Because that's how it was on the original stage," and moving on is easy even with those poor hand and foot movements.

Especially if the person sings really well!

Furthermore, because he did a conceptual song of a top tier idol, he can avoid questions like "Is it true that Moondae-ssi wants to be an idol?" relying almost entirely on his vocal skills.

In the end, it was the best option that could have been chosen in Park Moondae's situation.

'It's more than just having a good sense; he's got more experience—'

The Writer felt tricked in some way and looked through Park Moondae with dissatisfied eyes.

And, as if reading the Writer's mind, a judge who had been silently watching the other judges' positive comments lifted the microphone.

She was Youngrin of 'SaintU,' a female idol group that achieved success with a fancam showing her doing acrobatics while smiling during the rainy season when she was unknown.

"Right now, the choreography you did wasn't really difficult; can we see more of your dance?"

The Writer wanted to clap.

* * *

'It's done.'

It was useful to focus on the level-up by only singing this song till I got tired of it these days.

Because I spent all of my points on improving my vocal abilities, the 'Vocal' in my current status window has now changed to an A-.

It was a natural choice. First of all, a singer who can't sing in Korea, as well as idols, will be out.

If you can't dance, you can cover it with practice, but if you can't sing, the trace will show when you play the pre-recording.

Furthermore, there were usually fewer aspiring main vocalists than aspiring main dancers in the pool of aspiring idols.

So, if the position of the main vocalist is imprinted from the start, the chances of getting a position in the debut group are also increased.

Next is how the evaluation songs are selected.

I think my approach was correct, as there was much less negative feedback.

In other words, it is a filtering method that predicts the criticism that the judges will throw at me based on my weaknesses, and then removes all songs that could provoke a response from the judges.

'What's wrong with your dance?'

– Remove any songs that include full choreography.

'You don't even dance?'

– Remove ballads.

'You sing well. But you don't exude an idol-like aura?'

– Remove everything from the list except for idol songs.

'Wasn't it too much for you to sing this song by yourself?'

– Remove all of the songs that had three or more people sing them since I can't rearrange them and take that risk.

'You'll be compared to the original singer at every opportunity!'

– Removed all songs that were released in the last three years.

And from the remaining songs, I choose the one with the best music chart record.

Hmm, it was a good strategy, now that I think about it.

But there was at least one person who didn't get swept away by the atmosphere when I thought I could get away with it as it is right now.

Then I made eye contact with the judge holding the microphone.

That was a face I knew.

She was the first idol who made me realize that filming an idol may be profitable. Thanks to her, I was able to pay for the first and second semesters of tuition.

'Since she gained the reputation of being a hard worker with that acrobatic fancam, it seemed to be a win-win situation.'

However, I don't think it's a good idea for us to meet at this moment.

"I understand you haven't received any formal training. But since this is the first evaluation, shouldn't we at least check the basic status? If you participated in an audition program, I think you would have prepared at least one song."

It's crazy to say, 'I didn't prepare anything' here. It could be said that it's better to remain silent than to say anything like that.

"Yes. Then is this song possible?"

One of the staff quickly came closer to the stage and beckoned to me. I approached him and said the song I had in mind.

After that, the camera follows and even shoots the staff who are flinching in response.

Looking at this, I think I can avoid full editing. It's worth the effort.

And immediately, a cheerful accompaniment filled the set.

"…!?"

CHAPTER 5

The intro, which everyone in the country would be familiar with, passed by, and the lively vocals struck the ear.

I go with the most iconic pose I can remember to get things started.

Then one of the judges spat out the water he was drinking.

Oh, me too! I like you~

The feeling of my heart beating~! Is like popcorn!

POP! POP!

The popping beat is just ringing~

My heart is overflowing with this feeling!

Tap, tap, tap. Youngrin, the person who requested the dance, is the only one who gives a sincere nod in response to the simple foot movements. It seemed that she was the only professional here.

Soon, part of the song that can be danced to by at least half of the kids my age has come out.

POP! POP!

You're my Popcorn~ (Oh yeah!)

My heart

CON CON CON CON

Control it!

The chorus of MallangDalcom's 〈POP☆CON〉, which was released 10 years ago, beat the eardrums powerfully.

Known as the "forbidden song" for the CSAT, it was the main culprit in ruining the students' listening test that year because of its lyrics and crazy addiction.

By the way, I also took the CSAT exam at that time. But I can't do it again, because I don't have the money.

POP POP!

The popping Popcorn~ (Ooh~)

It was also famous for many people who uploaded dance covers, and the difficulty level was easy.

To put it another way, it was at a level that even children in the lower elementary school grades could practice.

I would have been cursed if it had been out 10 years ago at the peak of the trend. But I chose this song because I thought I could turn it into a memory correction and then move on to a comedy. (t/n : Memory correction (추억보정) means 'old memories make everything good.' For instance, you will think so good if you recall the suck movie you saw when you were a kid._

Of course, I'm keeping a straight face while dancing hard.

Even if others were to look at the remaining gags, it would be unpleasant for me to openly smile as a participant.

I had to give the impression that I had put a lot of effort into preparing for the dance.

Of course, it was also true that I worked really hard. Because I raised my level while practicing this. With achievements of 〈First Movement〉 and 〈10th Movements〉.

With the judges clapping and laughing, it seemed that I had made a mistake—but I don't know. They'll judge on their own.

I stopped dancing after making the last move of the first verse.

As I bowed my head and took a breath, cheers exploded as if I had come to my senses.

“Thank you.”

Youngrin was the first to take the microphone, but the choreographer spoke first.

How much he laughed till his eyes got red. Some tears came from laughing.

“Whoa… Oh, I never dreamed it would come out. Wasn’t Moondae 10 years old when POP☆CON was released? Did you even prepare for a talent show at that time?”

“It’s not like that, but I prepared it because I’m a fan of MallangDalcom Sunbaenim. (t/n : Sunbaenim (선배님) is a far more experienced person within the same school, company, or group.)

“Pfft, hahaha!”

For reference, MallangDalcom’s most recent album was released 4 years ago. It was so late that it seemed unusual to say that a 20-year-old was a fan even after their golden days.

Because the reason can’t be that he wants to be an idol.

Sure enough, the choreographer who asked me this question laughed again.

Next to him, Mudie muttered delightfully.

“Ah… So cute~.”

“You worked hard. First of all, you work hard!”

The male idol judge helped. It was a face that had taken away any doubts he had expressed when I said I had no experience.

Only then did Youngrin open her mouth.

“But that doesn’t mean you did well.”

I knew this would happen. It was a situation where close-ups and sound effects could be included through editing.

In addition, the line *‘Du–dung!’* will appear when the red subtitles are three times bigger.

I roughly anticipated the editing angle and waited for the rest of the comments.

“First of all, I can see that you have no skill when you start moving your body. Although you may receive a positive evaluation for our current atmosphere, future missions will be difficult.”

“I’m prepared for anything that comes my way.”

Not me, but the status window.

Regardless of the words I swallowed, Youngrin nodded heavily.

“Yeah.”

And she added with a relaxed expression.

“…Anyway, I can see your effort. Well done.”

“Thank you.”

I think I said ‘Thank you’ ten times today. Is this something I’ll often do in the future?

By then, the judges were exchanging opinions without holding the microphone, so I couldn’t hear them.

At this point, another cruel element of the program is revealed.

To begin with, all rankings are listed from 1st to 77th in the first evaluation. They then assigned the seats based on the order of the rankings.

Temporary rankings will also be used as soon as they're announced.

Moreover, if the next participant performs much better than they do while the seat is filled, the ranking will be pushed back, and they will be forced to leave the seat.

It's also a specialty of this show to film a moment in which the lower ranks are pushed and then sit at the bottom and cry.

Fortunately, I won't be in such a situation.

My ranking is… maybe 24th?

"Park Moondae's ranking is…… 17th place!"

They raised my rank by roughly 5 places in order to shoot a scene where my rank was pushed, which means that my actual rank was closer to my expectations.

'I think I went up about four or five places because of the atmosphere.'

I'm not sure if the judges were distracted by the atmosphere, but as the time went on, they should have been busy leaving the seat to the middle and high school students.

It was a little funny when I lowered my head and thought about it sullenly.

"Thank you."

"I'll teach you hard, so you'll rank higher next time."

The choreographer said with a smile. If I don't get better, I'll be replaced immediately, but I have a status window to work with.

'I wish they would choose a scene when the choreographer is touched by my performance.'

I nodded once again and headed for the set where the seats were placed.

The chairs with the ranks engraved on them grew bigger, more colorful, and softer as I went up. I saw a slight but big difference.

The 17th place I would sit was a leather chair on which a corporate executive would sit.

As I sat down, the participant who was sitting in 15th place on the opposite side greeted me. He looked like Park Moondae's age, with a gentle impression.

"Hello~"

"Hello."

"You're so good at singing! "

"Thank you. I think you did a great job too."

"Yes? Hahaha!"

I can't say for sure because I didn't watch his performance thoroughly, but judging by his ranks, it looks like he did well.

The participant laughed aloud and pointed to the name tag on his chest.

"My name is Lee Sejin!"

"…!"

I almost let out a sigh. I replied with the most brazen face possible.

"My name is Park Moondae. Please take good care of me."

"Please take good care of me~."

I ended the conversation naturally and looked ahead, and the next participant came in with good timing. But my mind kept wandering back to a name I had just heard.

Lee Sejin.

It was the name of a person who made their official debut through this program. So, should I say that it is the man who has been promised victory through personal connection?

But there was a problem.

It will be revealed that the punk was involved in a drug scandal one year after this program ended. Moreover, he works as a distributor.

I was in a Gukbap restaurant near the studio when I heard his name mentioned on the 9 o'clock news.

[Lee Sejin, a former 'Idol Joint-Stock Company,' was arrested on suspicion of drug distribution.]

...Let's not talk to him from now on.

It is important to know when to cut off. So, should I use the time to check the status window?

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level: 5

Title: None

Vocal: A-

Dance: D

Visual: C+

Talent: C

Characteristics: Infinite potential

!Status abnormality: Debut or die

Points Remaining: 1

First of all, I earned a point for leveling up from the stage I was on just now. I think it was thanks to breaking the achievement of 〈The First Stage〉.

As for the dance and talent elements, they seemed to have been created out of my performance alone.

Is it necessary for it to be officially recognized by the public because it was inactive during practice? I don't know the clear criteria.

In any case, while practicing, I could vaguely feel it—. Even if the talent was acceptable, it doesn't seem that *'Park Moondae'* had much of a talent for dancing.

My dance level is D, which is the same as the average person's.

If I invest 2 or 3 points in dance in the future, I think I can do anything.

However, I discovered a new possibility in the status window's 'Visual' section.

Even though I didn't spend any points on the Visual section, my grade improved since I paid attention to the way I looked.

In other words, I was able to raise my stats independently of the level-up effect shown in the status window. And that's a pretty positive factor.

Finally, there was one more unusual pop-up. A small one next to the status window.

[Successful performance!]

You deeply impressed the majority of people!

: Draw General Characteristics ☜ Click!

'Something weird popped out again.'

Still, given the use of words such as "success" and "impression," the nuance of the rewards should be great.

I clicked on the pull while pretending to touch my hair. Then something quite interesting popped up.

It was a picture of a gray slot machine. The slot next to the lever that had previously been pulled was spinning quite fast.

But the speed gradually slowed down. Soon enough, I could even check the contents of the slot at a glance.

Only a few of the slots were copper, while the most were gray.

[Strong heart]

[The misfortune of being humiliated eraser]

[Alligator's tears]

[Sleeping only after you die]

[Look at me!]

[…]

"…"

No, it's good to know what the characteristics are as soon as I see it, but—. It's still a bad name, isn't it?

I looked at the slot machine with no expectations. Anyway, it looked like it was going to stop soon.

Dung dung… dung!

A flower petal popped out of the slot machine.

The slot that stops is copper.

[Characteristic: 'Sleeping only after you die (D)' Acquired!]

When activated, you don't get tired even if you don't sleep.

Experience an acceleration bonus of up to 30% from 00:01 to 04:00.

Lasts for a week, one-time use.

"…!"

Unexpectedly, it has a characteristic that seems very useful. The name is— a bit like that, though.

Anyway, it was called 'pulling,' and it literally meant the same thing. And it's fascinating that the elements of such a lucky game are also appearing.

I confirmed that 'Sleeping only after you die (inactive)' has been added to the characteristics section at the bottom of the status window. Let's think about when it's the best time to use it.

"Participant Kang Minjo… 56th place!"

The evaluation process was still ongoing.

Aside from the suspected drug distributor next to me, the debut member has yet to come out.

I stood there and watched as the next participant walked onto the stage.

A man with a slender body and long arms and legs entered the stage.

Seeing that he was all alone, he was likely a participant who didn't have any connections with the other trainees.

A murmur could be heard among the participants in the ranks of the seating area. Of course, this was not because the participant came up alone.

"Wow!"

"That's amazing!"

This is because the participants who came in were very handsome. I could even hear the judges openly admiring from below.

“You look like a deer~.”

From my perspective, that was the level of appearance at which he didn’t have to worry about making his debut.

Should I say that he’s at a level where he doesn’t even need to go on a survival program? I’m sure he’ll do something when this program is over.

However, when I checked the name tag on his chest, it was a name I had never heard of before.

[Seon Ahyun]

If he can’t make his debut with that handsome face, he must have no talent at all. Because he seemed to be more handsome than most of the idols whose fancam data I had sold.

Well, in terms of the status window—all other abilities, except visual, are probably between the F and D grade.

‘If only I could see other people’s status windows, I’d know for sure.’

Surprisingly, as soon as I thought of that, a window really popped up next to the participant.

“…!”

Does this mean I can see the status windows of other people as well?

[Name: Seon Ahyun]

Vocal: B- (A)

Dance: A (EX)

Visual: A+ (S+)

Talent: B (A+)

Characteristics: Grit (inactive.)

!Status abnormality: Lack of self-esteem.

It was a splendid status window. To the point where I think he'll be in the top 10 easily. Is the value in brackets the maximum growth rate? If so, he has a promising future ahead of him.

However, the last part stands out the most.

[Status abnormality: Lack of self-esteem.]

With that face? It would have been understandable if he had shown arrogance.

Anyway, seeing other people's abilities was a huge benefit. Anyway, I thought I wouldn't starve to death just by relying on an entertainment company.

While I was looking over the menu with great interest, I heard the voice of the MC.

"Yes, participants, please introduce yourself!"

And Seon Ahyun picked up the microphone.

The hand holding the microphone was trembling.

"H, h, hello—"

"…!"

He didn't stutter by mistake because he was nervous. He made it seem out of place because of his awkward way of speaking.

It was a distinct symptom of the stuttering disorder.

In addition, I felt that he was very conscious of his speech disorder. Was it right for me to mention that I could feel his anxiety and embarrassment so heavily?

That must be the reason. I quickly understand this participant– Seon Ahyun's status window.

They can turn his stuttering into a story with this kind of visual and skills, so why didn't he make his debut?

As expected, is the problem more than the status abnormality of a lack of self-esteem? If I can find out more detail—.

[Lack of self-esteem]

: I despise myself.

All stats are decreased by two levels.

"…!"

Suddenly, a pop-up came up again. I wasn't expecting to be able to check the details just by thinking about it.

'It's very useful.'

I'll need to recheck my status abnormality to see how much time I have left.

"Ahyun, by any chance… do you have trouble speaking?"

"I, I… Uh, when I was a kid, I had an accident…"

"Ah…"

On the stage, the storytelling was just getting started.

To be more precise, Seon Ahyun seems to be trying to explain his condition, while the production team seems to be trying to turn it into a story.

Fake responses are also erupting from the participants surrounding me.

In particular, the guy who shook his head and had a sad expression on his face seems to have been used as a reaction cut.

They will even include these lines in their final result.

“What to do…”

They shouldn’t have reacted in this way to such a sensitive topic.

On the contrary, if there is such editing, it would sound more like ‘that type of reaction is also assault.’

Rather than becoming agitated, I simply stared forward with an expression of ‘I see.’

After saying a few obvious good words, the judges carefully asked for the stage.

“Then Ahyeon-gun, can we see your performance?”

“Y, yes…”

The following stage wasn’t as bad as one may expect. It’s just up to the point of becoming a good overall performance.

This means that if the status window is correct, that participant’s performance was worse than his actual ability.

“Seon Ahyun-gun ranks in 18th place!”

This is what happens when there is no mentality or strategy. He’s ranked lower than me even with that status window.

Anyway, the evaluation was good, maybe because they thought the skill was enough or because they didn’t want to say anything bad.

“Good job~”

“I’ll look forward to it.”

A variety of warm words were given to him by the judges. Some people even raise their thumbs.

But Seon Ahyun's face was dark as he bowed deeply. Following the MC's instructions, he left the stage and sat down next to me as if nothing had happened.

"…"

I think I should say hello—.

Seon Ahyun glances at my seat but doesn't talk to me.

Hopefully, it won't be a situation in which I ignore him by all means possible.

But it was annoying to open my mouth. So I just nodded sideways.

Seon Ahyun is surprised and keeps his head bowed.

"There are 5 participants who will be judged next! Choi Jinsoo-gun, Hongseong-gun—"

I counted the number of remaining participants in my mind and sighed softly.

There's a long way to go.

CHAPTER 6

I'm tired.

My eyes feel stinging.

They kept the participants at the set while these ignorant bastards judged all 77 participants.

They divided the participants into groups even at break time and only sent them to the restroom.

Most likely, it's because it's difficult to get hold of so many energetic children, but because of that, my patience is running out.

If I saw the status window from a position where I could see it from all sides, every performance would be boring.

I went to the filming of the active idol performance and watched it until I was sick of it, but the trainee's performance couldn't have been good enough to impress me.

Of course, there were two or three times when I was impressed.

I looked up at the two men sitting on the overly glamorous sofa.

They're the current 1st and 2nd place now. They are both from the same famous agency, and they did very well. The status window was impressive, too.

They both made their debuts, with one of them taking first place.

If I stick with those punks, my chances of making my debut will increase—. But the thought of playing with a teenager group that would have been a good match 10 years ago at this age made me dizzy.

Let's think about it again when the team battle comes out.

Fortunately, the evaluation is coming to an end.

“Participant Ryu Cheongwoo… 9th place!”

I got pushed. The last participant squeezed through the top ranks, which were already packed. If things continue in this way— my current rank will be 22nd.

That was a fairly good defense I put up.

The number of participants whose skills are better than mine is, in fact—7 participants.

I should keep managing it so that the overestimation doesn’t come up again.

“Thank you!”

The former representative of the national archery team, who left a soft impression, smiled as he walked off the stage.

I heard that he won a gold medal in the team event at the Olympics, but I’m not sure. I recall him only as a part of the group’s debut lineup.

Anyway, he was a good talent that the agency would like because he wouldn’t go to the army.

Wait.

Come to think of it… Do I have to enlist in the military?

In the past, I had received the 4th grade in my body and had to drop out for community service at the city hall.

Filming finally ended just as my mind wandered to a scary topic that I had never thought of before.

“Cut! Thank you for your hard work! Participants, let’s move right away.”

“Yes~”

Applause and responses rang out from throughout the place.

My head was spinning as I followed the staff's guidance.

As soon as this filming is completed, I must check to see if *'Park Moondae'* is included there.

"Get your rank ticket~ You can take it on board!"

The accommodation was a 10-minute walk from the set. After the huge success of the first season, it was a newly built dormitory on a mountain behind the broadcasting station.

But I needed to use transportation, and the reason was obvious.

They are trying to pick a cut for broadcast.

That means they had varied modes of transportation based on their rank.

"Participants! If you were in the Top 10, please come this way~."

"Wow, Limousine!"

"Wow~ I really like it!"

"This is amazing."

Behind the top-ranked participants in the black limousine, who gave the camera a thumbs-up, the lower-ranked participants could be seen.

People who were ranked 51st to 77th moved by walking.

They did their best to act happy and humorous, but I could see that they were holding back tears all over their faces.

There were always cameras following the participants.

There is a possibility that their misery was used as a way to pique their interest.

To be honest, it's a bit gross.

"Oh, it's good?"

From the 11th to the 25th, premium bus vehicles were waiting.

Lee Sejin smiled broadly as he got into the bus first.

I waited for a while to ensure we wouldn't end up sitting next to each other by accident, then entered the bus slowly.

Someone quickly followed and got on the bus from behind, making a thumping sound.

Then he hesitated and sat quietly next to me.

It was Seon Ahyun.

"…?"

Why are you…?

Well, never mind. It was nice to be quiet.

* * *

They quickly arrived at their dorm. We also used different floors for each rank, just like last season.

The caste system will stay the same until the team battle mission comes out.

A spacious five-person room was arranged from the 11th to the 25th ranked. I got pushed up in the rankings by five people, but this means I won't have to share a room with Lee Sejin, who is ranked 20th.

I was lucky.

"Wow~ Me! I'm going to use this bed!"

As soon as I entered the bedroom consisting of two bunk beds and one single bed, a man randomly jumped into the single bed.

I guess he wanted to look fun and cheerful for the camera.

I moderately grabbed the bottom of the bunk bed.

Then, once again, Seon Ahyeon placed his luggage on the bed above me.

"…"

He looked up and bowed his head. It's as if I have a subordinate who follows me —.

After that, we changed into the training clothes we were given and went to gather.

When I think about it now, I think it was because aspiring celebrities were harder to deal with, while a relatively quiet, normal person was more comfortable with me.

I left him alone because I didn't think he would be a problem.

However, I should avoid being close enough to the point where we would both pick the same team because I could be criticized for my personality by arguing.

"You're going to start training in earnest from now! It's called~ Customized movement class!"

The MC introduced a system that everyone already knew with an exaggerated tone.

"Everyone, your scores for vocal and dance have been decided based on the grades you got from the judges!"

"Yes!"

"There are upper, middle, and lower groups in each class; each level aims to improve their skills through specialized training. "

Until now, it was similar to other auditions. The next thing was the problem.

“And you can change classes in real-time at any time!”

“…!”

“It all depends on your hard work and dedication!”

For example, if you absorb the tutor’s lessons in “Intermediate Vocal” like a sponge and become good at it quickly, you will be moved up to “Advanced Vocal” the next time you train.

Of course, it also meant that if you didn’t do well, your class would drop right away.

After ten days of this, the final grade is determined based on an individual evaluation of the theme song.

It meant that they would burn children’s mental mercilessly in order to gather as much footage as possible.

“This badge… Participant Park Moondae!”

“Yes.”

As expected, I received ‘Advanced Vocal’ and ‘Beginner Dance’.

It was a little embarrassing to have a gold vocal badge and a dull bronze dance badge on my shoulder.

The badge was overly exaggerated, making it look cheap.

For reference, there were cases when they didn’t provide badges at all.

On the Internet, this case was called *an ‘absolutely worthless person.’*

“If you don’t have a badge… It means you’re not a part of any grade. You will take a beginner’s class together, but you also have to take extra special training at night.”

To be honest, receiving a camera was a great opportunity for a beginner.

However, if you are the person involved, you will think differently.

A former child actor with trembling hands over there was a good example.

It was said that he was in a thriller movie that 10 million people watched 10 years ago, but he kept saying that he couldn't be active after that because of unfavorable things that happened to him.

That participant is judged as out-of-class for dance and their vocals are also a beginner. In the status window, each is an F grade and a D grade.

He most likely came out with the intention of making a comeback in broadcasting rather than being an idol.

What was a little surprising was that the name over there was also *'Lee Sejin'.*

Though I didn't know that there were two people with the same name, it's clear that the one who made his debut is the other.

Why don't I think he's Lee Sejin, who made his debut?

Just by looking at him, it seems that he will be thrown away after being used as a topic of discussion at the beginning.

Most importantly, he made it clear that he hates getting hurt.

'The PD will like it.'

Eventually, the huge screen lit up when all the badges were distributed.

"Now, the song that you will be practicing will be revealed. For the next ten days! You will do your best to master this song and present it to the shareholders of <Idol Joint-Stock Company>!"

It was a song that would be played everywhere until the next year.

Even though I was studying for a civil service exam and had already stopped using social media, I still remembered the chorus's moves.

It wasn't on the same level as 〈POP☆CON〉 however, it was still a movement worth following.

"The song for this season is… 〈Shining Star〉 !"

Along with the catchy beat, lyrics that were moderately overwhelming and childish enough to bear began to flow out.

I'm standing on the stage

You won't know me yet

STAR LIGHT swaying inside me

I will come to you like a flash of light

The choreography was performed by a dancer who appeared on the screen.

There were a few exclamations and a mysterious groan here and there during the performance.

And I realized it, too.

The difficulty of the chorus was fake.

For the sake of popularity, it was made difficult to follow, and the intro was made dirty and complicated.

I couldn't even think about memorizing it, so verse 1 went by in the blink of an eye. And then the chorus started.

What's shining on the stage today?

It's me!

Yes, the shining star you will create.

It's me!

I finally wake up and shine

Look at this moment~

I shine the most!

Even the choreography for the chorus looked like it would make me trip if I tried to do it.

I made up my mind right away.

"Status window."

Let's just… Let's not sleep.

"…Activate 'Sleeping only after you die'."

* * *

Calories. I had to calculate the calories well.

What I mean is that I should have known earlier that I would be burning a lot of calories since I don't sleep.

I was so hungry on the first night that I almost got angry.

'T, t, this… Would you like some?'

And Seon Ahyun gave me a chocolate bar. I spoke casually after saying a few words of gratitude.

He's the same age as *'Park Moondae'* and I felt really refreshed after talking casually to such a young child.

From the next day on, I tried to eat and drink three times a day as much as I could. The meals, well… It tastes like Jjambap, but it was good that there was no limit on the amount. (t/n : 짬밥 (Jjambab) means military meals)

On the ninth day.

I memorized all the choreography. From beginning to end.

Being able to spend all night without fatigue certainly worked.

In addition, I was able to level up multiple times.

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level: 7

Title: None

Vocal: A-

Dance: D

Visual: C+

Talent: C

Characteristics: Infinite potential, Sleeping only after you die (D)

!Status abnormality: Debut or die

Points Remaining: 3

There were a lot of achievements that could be done up to 500 times, so it was a good thing.

'Until today… 5 people.'

Five people have already been moved from a beginner level to an intermediate level.

Very few people have dramatically improved their skills after only a few days of training, so most of them must have ruined the first evaluation and now have found their skills.

Even if they included me in this, it was more likely to be tied up and passed by.

Then it was pointless to be promoted. I had to show that I had improved my skills more dramatically, even if I had enough scenes to use.

It's because the choreographer scolded me from the first day.

– Again!

– Foot, bend your left foot!

– Why are you swinging your arms? Hold it up!

As soon as the class started on the first day, the choreographer stopped talking and tortured the participants in all directions.

Thanks to this, the atmosphere became heavier, as if at a mourner's house.

And at the end of the class, the choreographer pointed me out and talked to me.

And when the class was over, the choreographer pointed at me and said to me.

– Moondae-ya.

– Yes.

– If you keep doing this with your choreography, you won't have any answers for the next evaluation.

–…

I wasn't exceptionally bad at this class.

Because it was a *'beginner'* class in the first place, if I had to ask, would it be about average? It's not like I'm a bad dancer; it's just that I was at the level of an ordinary person who works hard.

But I was a person with a high rank in the first place. So this was a matter of expectations.

It’s not surprising that these are the same lines as last season.

– No, I think so. I gave you the wrong rank. I guess you never had the skills to get that rank to begin with.

That’s correct. He knows that, and maybe he did it just for broadcasting fun.

– Let’s do it right, okay? Get a hold of yourself.

– Yes.

Most of you won’t suddenly learn basic skills that you didn’t have before after just a few days of training unless you’re really lucky and talented.

But I can, so I just nod my head as if I had made up my mind.

The criticisms and advice that didn’t help were not encouraging.

But it needed to seem to hurt my feelings in other people’s eyes.

So I had to live with this provocative material, even if it was a waste.

“Thank you for your hard work!”

“Yeah. Don’t give up.”

The choreographer nodded at the greetings of the participants, who were drenched in sweat.

And after confirming that the staff had organized the camera, he looked into his phone and left the class.

This is the end of the morning dance class.

After eating, it’s time for vocal class.

For lunch, there was Bulgogi and Seaweed Soup.

I ate as much as I could eat. And after a simple shower, I went to the advanced vocal class alone.

Oh, come to think of it, I have a confession to make.

“Then Moondae should sing it~”

I ate raw for my Vocal. (t/n: 날로 먹는 means that someone gets something easily without working hard.)

CHAPTER 7

Judge Mudie was the trainer for the Advance Vocal.

She gave me a generous score on my first evaluation, and she also said nice things about all the other participants. So there were also good words said during the training.

Of course, this doesn't mean that she never gets angry in any situation.

"Wongil-ah, that's not it… Haa."

"…"

The participant who kept missing the same beat bowed his head for the fifth day in a row.

He seemed to be trying to hide his anger instead of his regret, but it didn't matter.

Because the important thing to remember is that even a good coach will struggle to hide their frustration when watching a participant make so many mistakes.

And here's the main culprit.

"Moondae-ya, do you want to sing this part?"

"Yes."

When the trainer pointed it out, I moved forward, and the electric piano started playing the accompaniment. Then, I started singing the part before the chorus along with the music.

"I draw the future like a shooting star~."

When the trainer nodded in response to the clear voice and accurate beat, the participant who had failed earlier stomped his feet in frustration.

Yes. The flower bed was the reason I sang this theme song so well from the beginning.

It was unavoidable that those who already knew this song would have a different starting point than those who didn't.

Even though I wasn't listening to the demo, I listened to the complete song. It was okay to just sing based on what I remember.

Moreover, my voice was perfectly suited to this song, and the trainer was pleased with how I sang it because it didn't sound dirty.

Even now, some people were whispering as they looked at Mudie's happy face.

"…He's really good."

"I know."

What's worse is that the sample comes from "ordinary people," which means that the standard set by Advance Class is higher, so the other guy would suffer more.

Even more so if the participant is only good at singing.

As confirmed in the first evaluation, two participants had A-grade vocals this season. And both of their dances are below grade C. Everyone, including me, was in a tough condition.

Also, that *'Choi Wongil'* participant, who is currently being scolded, was one of those two A-grades.

It's funny that he is the same middle school boy who tried to identify me before the filming. However, he was actually a first-year high school student, and not a middle schooler at all.

In any case, at an age when his self-consciousness was high, he deserved to be angry because this was something that he had been hearing from his trainer for several days.

He was compared to the person he ignored as soon as he met him.

“That’s right!”

As soon as I finished singing the pre-chorus part, the trainer tapped the keyboard as if she was feeling better. Even when he heard the sound of the light hitting, Choi Wongil didn’t raise his head.

“Wongil, you should sing it like this, okay?”

“…”

Given his abilities, I don’t think it’s possible to make that many mistakes. But unfortunately, after I cleared the whole song on the first day, he continued to argue, and in the end, it seemed like his mental was shattered.

Let’s see, this is roughly how the first day seems to have started.

– Wow, I’m glad you got praise for your singing again, Hyung-nim. You have to hurry up and come up from the Beginner Dance!

– I think you fit this pure song well because you’re kind of amateurish.

He used to say vague things that got on people’s nerves. It was a subtle nuance, but if the opponent got mad, he would be treated like an idiot.

Also, it was all said later when the microphone was turned on.

But in the end, I couldn’t stand it and got pissed off by him—.

– You’re very lucky. I’m jealous. It’s the most important factor in the entertainment industry. It would have been nice if you could dance with luck, that’s too bad. But still, fighting!

– After all, I think it’s right that there are lucky people above those who work hard. Most of the people here are desperate for their lives. But no matter how you participated, you got such good reviews.

It has gotten to this point.

Now, it's embarrassing to fight in front of everyone and be ignored. However, it is unavoidable because he can't do what he knows on purpose.

You might not know this, but this is also a matter of life and death for me—.

"Calm down, don't be too nervous, and let's try again."

"…Yes."

Choi Wongil tried to start singing again, but then he made another mistake.

That's too bad.

Even until the end of the vocal class that day, I received compliments from the trainer and sharp gazes from several participants, including Choi Wongil.

Because it had been so long since I had been evaluated for this rank, I was a little tired, but it wasn't too bad. But, of course, there would be no such check if it were a real X.

Then the last day of training ended with both classes remaining in the same condition and the practice achievements continually increasing.

On the morning of the last day, the participants in the Advanced Vocal class recorded a song.

Anyway, they will put them into a group, and their names will not be mentioned, so it won't mean much.

Instead, let's focus on the afternoon.

It was time for the long-awaited ranking evaluation.

* * *

The lights on the set are turned on.

"Everyone, how have you been?"

“Ah~ it was hard!”

“I’m just… I slept soundly because I was tired.”

“Did you work hard on the teaching?”

“Of course! Oh, I hope today will be worth it.”

The judges sat around the chairs and greeted each other properly.

Even though they were already done greeting each other in the waiting room in the morning, the conversation was like the show’s opening scene.

The place where they came in and sat down was set up to look like a multi-to-one interview room. (t/n : 다대일 means the interviewer will be more than 1 person, and they will interview you. (Other interviewees will not be interviewed with you))

The set was recycled from the previous season, and special effects were prepared.

The judges, who were asked to show their reaction as much as possible in advance, pretended not to know and spoke naturally.

“It’s totally— like that here. I think it feels like we will have a very important interview.”

“It’s true about the important interview~ It was a Grade Interview!”

“Is this an interview for joining Idol Joint-Stock Company?”

As soon as the judges are done talking, the light on the desk in front of where they are sitting turns on.

“Whoa!”

The words *‘SHINE YOUR STAR’* were written in colorful cursive on the desk.

As they did in other seasons, the judges started to applaud when this season's catchphrase turned out to be grand.

But this time, surprisingly, the wall began to move.

"Huh?!"

"What is this!"

With the skillful reaction of the judges, the walls of the interview room set went down to the floor. The wall then disappeared, revealing the full open set.

"The re-listing of the new Idol Joint-Stock Company! The first gateway is—the full public evaluation!"

"Whoa!"

What filled the backs of the judges was an open-air theater-like audience. And the front seats of the audience were filled with participants.

Participants, who thought it was just a temporary seat to wait, were shocked, which was in contrast to how the professional MCs looked.

"The 77 participants who practiced the same song will evaluate each other as an audience!"

In fact, the participants could see each other's stages even during the first evaluation.

However, everyone's expressions hardened because they didn't know they would openly evaluate those who practiced the same song throughout the same period as audiences.

This was because during the last season, they entered the practice room alone and received a separate evaluation.

"The Grade Evaluation order is in reverse order of rank!"

"…!"

“77th place, Chu Seonggu-gun, please come forward!”

The participant who was called to the stage looked like he was half-dead. People looked at him with sympathy and whispered, but Park Moondae didn’t say a word.

As with Seon Ahyun’s first ranking evaluation, the editing can make sympathy seem like a gimmick.

It was a feeling that came from the experience of periodically searching the idol community to set a price for filming data.

“Yes, thank you for your hard work.”

“…Thank you…”

Naturally, the 77th participant missed most of the first verse and completely ruined the evaluation.

“…”

The next participant was also half-crushed on the stage in a cold and tense atmosphere.

After evaluating five or six people in this way, the judges couldn’t hide the discomfort on their faces.

It was a cruel and dry arrangement.

However, the production team had nothing to lose.

‘Anyway, if they can’t do it, they’ll have to take a provocative cut to make up for the appearance fee.’

They were used as disposable cards.

However, it was also meant to shed more light.

Like a participant who has the mental power to grip and digest the stage even when the minds of those in lower ranks are falling apart.

Or the participants who showed significant growth in this short period of time.

There was also a guess that it wouldn't matter if the participants with the worst skills were very good-looking or well-known since their terrible skills wouldn't attract attention to them.

Interestingly, some participants met both the former and the latter.

"Participant Lee Sejin, you must have worked hard."

"You're doing great!"

"H, h, huh—. T, thank you…"

It was Lee Sejin, who used to be a child actor. He followed the song to the end with a red face and barely breathing without missing a beat.

It wasn't enough, and it was awkward to say that it was "digested."

But when people of a similar rank who rolled up the stage were put before and after him, it looked much better.

Park Moondae had a moment of doubt.

'Is he the Lee Sejin who is debuting?'

Of course, he couldn't say for sure, so he ended his thoughts right away by putting the participant on the watch list.

'I should stay away from drug dealers.'

And the boring middle-class evaluation section followed.

The participants' skills gradually got better, and some of them stood out from time to time.

But it was hard not to get tired of hearing the same song more than 40 times.

After the tense mood at the start subsided, everyone showed their skills, and the judges regained their composure and began to feel bored.

“Well…”

“I think it’s fine.”

When the boredom reached its peak, it was Park Moondae’s turn.

Seon Ahyun raised his fist to Park Moondae with a blank face. It was such a grim expression.

He had just finished the evaluation and had thoroughly digested the song.

“F, f, fighting…”

“…? Huh, yeah.”

Why is he suddenly so friendly?

Park Moondae was surprised, but he greeted him back calmly. It was a victory of social consciousness.

He walked slowly onto the stage. It was so unfamiliar to him that his head felt somewhat heated with a sense of excitement.

“22nd place, Park Moondae!”

“Yes.”

The judges’ attitude became uninterested in him.

‘You’re good at singing, but you can’t dance.’

After a few days of trying, the choreographer’s expectations for Park Moondae disappeared. He even thought bluntly.

‘It’s getting annoying.’

“We’ll begin the grade evaluation.”

The boring prelude came out.

Park Moondae started the first move. Then, he turned around by pulling both arms in a big move.

“…?”

The first person to feel out of place was the choreographer.

‘Is the line different?’

Until the last face-to-face class just two days ago, Park Moondae had no such thing as a ‘dance line.’

The sense of matching the point of connection and disconnection, the point of giving and taking power.

If that is the difference between rhythm and dance, then Park Moondae’s movements were rhythmic.

Obviously, it was—.

‘Why… are you good at dancing?’

CHAPTER 8

Strictly speaking, Park Moondae's dance wasn't all that impressive. It's just enough that he can fit in a group dance and wouldn't be stood out.

To put it another way, it gives the people who watch him participate in group dances enough enjoyment.

'Even if I call it a debut song right now—'

It looks like he won't be pushed by the other members. What an incredible development!

The choreographer was slightly excited by the unexpected situation but soon calmed down.

'He can't suddenly have a talent he didn't have in two days.'

So, if he had used his brain a little, he would have tried to match the impact of the first introduction with only the early performance.

'In a little while, he'll lose the rhythm again… '

"…"

But it didn't go back. Park Moondae entered the chorus with the same level as the beginning.

No, on the contrary, the tempo control in the chorus improves as the song continues.

He's not like the majority of the lower-class participants, who move weakly. It's not a dance that roughed up the joint, but it did catch a certain angle.

– The one who is shining on stage today… It's me!

In addition, he also sings the whole song honestly, without skipping or missing any parts.

Even though the technique was lacking, it was clean and powerful, and there wasn't a single note that was flat or out of tune.

Judge Mudie lightly tapped the pen next to the choreographer.

It seemed like she was just doing it unconsciously, but this must mean that she likes it so much.

Even in his ears, who doesn't know much about vocals, he thought Park Moondae was the best among participants so far.

– Look, at this moment–I'll shine the brightest!

No, he's at a great level.

A clean tone enters his ear.

'How much effort does an amateur put into dancing while singing and still being so stable?'

The choreographer thought about it casually.

He treated those who were *'good, promising, full of potential'* differently from those who were not.

And now, inside the choreographer's mind, Park Moondae's grade, which had fallen because he wasn't good at dancing, was changed.

'Since he can sing well, he must be worried about singing steadily while dancing. Is he busy learning the choreography?'

But the feeling of discomfort hasn't entirely disappeared.

'…It's hard to dance like that in two days without any reason.'

Meanwhile, Park Moondae finished the song without losing tempo and strength until the end of the second verse.

The judges' seats were silent.

Despite his doubts, he suddenly felt positive emotions rushing through his head.

It was admirable.

"Whoo, whoo, thank you."

Soon after the song ended, Park Moondae's face was turning red, and he was breathing hard as if he had used up all his strength.

Instead of the brazenness in the first evaluation, in which he boldly selected songs and didn't change facial expressions, this time, he had a face full of enthusiasm.

It had the kind of look that made people think, *'Ah… he worked hard.'*

Such a gap had the effect of making the viewer burst into tears for no reason.

Especially Mudie, who was sitting next to the choreographer and looked like she was about to pour out a bunch of compliments at any moment.

The choreographer thought that the other judges would do the same thing, but not as much as she would.

But no one else could have saved this impact as much for the broadcast as he did because he's the one who has been going to dance class for half a month.

So, the choreographer pretended not to notice the production team's indirect look when they told Youngrin to give the first evaluation.

First, he spoke into the microphone by opening his mouth.

"Moondae-ya."

"Whoo… Yes."

“Good job.”

“…”

It was a more definite compliment because it was simple. Park Moondae smiled instead of answering.

It was a smile that was sure enough to make him look mischievous, unlike the participant who had been quiet for half a month.

* * *

As expected, a good twist wins.

There was no way this method wouldn’t work for the idol audition program.

Even though I was out of breath and felt like my heart would pop out of my throat, I felt relieved and at ease.

Especially because the judges showed a good reaction.

“Oh, my, it was admirable.”

“Well, Moondae-ssi, there is nothing I can say to criticize you today~.”

“You did a great job.”

It felt like I was one step further away from sudden death.

‘As expected. Investing all three points accumulated during filming in dance was the right answer.’

So, the current grade for Dance is C.

To be honest, the sensation of leveling up was much greater than when I was leveling up my Vocal ability.

It was a feeling I learned right away through experience, even though my body couldn’t match what I knew in my head.

The sensation of suddenly being able to use muscles I couldn't use before was also clear all over my body.

To the point where I can feel pleasure in it.

Maybe this is similar to the participants in the Intermediate class who can't go to the Advanced class.

I even memorized the choreography without sleeping for the first week, and by the end of that time, I had it down to the point where I could perform it without thinking about it.

If I limited it to this song, it might be better than most participants in Intermediate Dance classes.

'I did it in a single leap without any intermediate process.'

As long as it's not edited, I'll pass the first elimination round with this.

It looks like I'm making good progress toward survival step by step.

Then the question that I expected came up.

"By the way, Moondae-ya, what the hell did you do in two days?"

I can tell that Judge Mudie asked, "Why?" with the shape of her mouth in response to the choreographer's question.

The choreographer adds explanations as if answering them.

"He can dance all of a sudden? We haven't seen each other in two days, but suddenly."

"That's—"

I took a deep breath and lightly brushed my hair on purpose. It must make me look embarrassed.

"I asked a good friend."

“A good friend?”

“It was Seon Ahyun.”

In other words, it was a smoke screen. (Smoke screen = it is intended to hide the truth about your activities or intentions.)

I can’t say I’ve leveled up with the status window, so I’m trying to move on emotionally instead.

And at the same time, my roommate was Seon Ahyun, who was in the Advanced Dance class.

It’s not like there is no such thing as a sudden improvement after receiving helpful advice from your peers, so I decided to give it a shot at least once.

– By any chance, do you have time?

– D, do you talk to me—?

– Yeah. I’m sorry, but if this situation happens, can you do this—.

– Y, yes! I will do it!

–… Yeah. Okay.

In addition, I was lucky that Seon Ahyun taught me too hard. To the point where he would have been sorry if I couldn’t make improvements.

I was a little embarrassed because he taught me for almost two hours by splitting every move with passion.

I was merely trying to match it up roughly—.

In any case, it wouldn’t hurt Seon Ahyun in any way to have an image that helped inexperienced participants who have no idea what they’re doing. Well, it’s not bad.

Should I make the situation somewhat more dramatic? Let's add some more useless words.

"…Ahyun is very kind."

"Hey, are you saying I'm not kind then?"

The choreographer poked right in.

But with a smile on his face, he looks like he's making a joke.

I feel like it went pretty well. There was a warm atmosphere among the judges.

"Do you remember what I said during the first evaluation?"

Youngrin of 'SaintU' asked softly. It didn't seem like a real question but rather a sentence that started a conversation.

"I can't dance at all, so future missions will be hard for me."

Youngrin smiled faintly.

"I think I said it wrong. Park Moondae-ssi seems to be able to overcome it even though it is difficult."

"Thank you."

"Today, I enjoyed it very much. I hope you can move more relaxedly the next time."

"I will do my best to do that."

There's no way I'll be able to relax with just those words, but the audition program required me to answer clearly. It's kind of fun.

Anyway, it was successful. The judges gave me a favorable evaluation, and their expectations for me were reasonable.

I guess then my grade will be gold.

* * *

The theme song, like other idol audition programs, was the first content revealed to the public in the Idol Joint-Stock Company>.

And, of course, those who do it well get a good amount of theme songs. This 'good participant' was judged by how well they did in this grade.

As you might have guessed from looking at the class division badges, the grades of gold, silver, and bronze were categorized into upper, middle, and lower levels.

"But the participants who don't even meet the conditions for bronze— are ejected!"

That sound has been present in every season, but it has never been realized, so I don't have to worry about it.

And above these three classes, there was one more class.

"<Idol Joint-Stock Company> has returned with a newer look; who will represent this re-listed season in the Platinum grade?"

It was the Platinum grade.

They used all kinds of metaphors on the internet, like games with multiple levels and games that asked their parents how they were doing, making this grade a Meme.

To be honest, I'm a little glad that the production team didn't name it Diamond.

Anyway, the other participants were tense as they waited for the MC to make an announcement.

They placed a box, and a badge symbolizing the grade was placed inside it.

I didn't have to think too much because I already knew what my grade would be.

Silver used to be from ranked 26th, but if I look at the numbers in the status window, it is now in the top 25. And I wasn't enough to be in the top 10 in the

Platinum grade.

Well, then it's gold for me.

"All participants, please open the grade box!"

I opened the box with a small faint expression, trying not to let it show.

But then I hardened.

I saw a shiny, holographic badge made of Platinum inside the box.

It was a Platinum grade badge.

"……"

As I stiffened, Seon Ahyun, who was holding up his gold badge from the side, tilted his head and then looked surprised.

"W, w, whoa. Whoa!"

"What is this— Oh my gosh! That's amazing! Wow, that's amazing!!"

Lee Sejin, who had been in 20th place before, looked inside my box while holding a gold badge and shouted.

Then, he slapped me on the back and shouted.

"You're really amazing! Platinum!!"

I have no idea when we've been close.

Didn't we just say hi to each other on the way here and there? Since he was the first person to do that, I was hesitant.

I took a deep breath and picked up the badge from the box.

The other participants seem to think that I'm moved, but it's more complicated than that in my mind.

'Why Platinum?'

I knew that two or three participants from each season got a Platinum grade based on how much they improved, not how good they were in their skills.

But I don't think I was at that point yet.

And then I realized.

'…The order of grade evaluation!'

Because of this, there are fewer people who will jump out of the middle and lower ranks. So it seemed reasonable to me.

I think the fact that I had prepared for and practiced the dance overnight because of regression was a factor in why it was better than the equivalent status windows.

"…Hmm."

I rolled the badge in my hand.

I'm sure it leaves a strong impression, but the aftertaste was a bit strange.

'I think a lot of trouble will happen if I make a mistake.'

I didn't know what kind of editing would be included in the next evaluation if I made even one mistake. In the first season, the same thing happened to one participant.

No, after thinking about it, there was nothing to go on to the next evaluation. Even if the editing point is a little off to get the Platinum grade right now, I will get a lot of negative comments.

Choi Wongil, who is looking at me right now, would be a great target if he said in an interview something like, *'Honestly, I didn't fully understand.'*

But it's crazy to show that you don't like it here.

'I can't help it.'

I slowly picked up the badge and put it on. When I turned my head, I saw other participants wearing Platinum badges.

As expected, the first and second places in the first evaluation were both in the Platinum grade. Aside from that, most of the people who sat on the sofa were also given Platinum grades again.

The top 10 participants seemed to have closed the gap between themselves and those who got a Gold grade.

I was the only one from the top 20. Damn it.

'I will need to concentrate a lot on fire.' (It means a term referring to criticism directed at a negative object or idea.)

—No, let's think positively. It's actually a good thing.

'There will be lots of footage.'

Anyway, there was a battle for the footage that was shown on broadcast until the stage fancam came out.

I would avoid being eliminated unconditionally at the beginning, so I could steadily move toward my goal of making my debut within a year.

'As long as I don't become completely unlikable around here.'

I made a firm commitment. Let's be quiet, so I don't get picked on by others.

Let's level up like crazy and beat everything to Dance and Vocal.

"Please come up to the stage, starting with the participants who received the Platinum grade!"

—And first of all, on the stage of the theme song, let's avoid going near the participants who have an unconditional A Dance stat.

Because if they compared us, things would get messed up.

CHAPTER 9

On the theme song stage, the participants were set up in the shape of a fan, with the platinum grade group in the center. Of course, the higher the grade, the closer it gets to the center.

Aside from that, there were parts that only the platinum group could perform, so the grade preference was all that mattered.

However, everyone seemed to pay attention to the grade because getting one shot on the camera could change the initial ranking.

Besides, the production staff and trainers spoke and acted as if grades had great meaning, making it perfect for young participants to be swept away. And in other words, the number of people who talked to me went up five times when I got the Platinum badge.

As someone who had never experienced this kind of social hierarchy in high school, I was a little skeptical.

What steps will the production team, which has such a unique personality, take in the future to create an atmosphere like this—?

Fortunately, the vicious production team also had direct thoughts. Participants who got a Platinum grade and had a dance level of A or higher were moved to the front of the line at the start timing and during the dance break.

And the participant who wasn't very good at dancing was pulled back cleverly. Well, of course, this was also the case for me.

My dance break movements were slightly behind Gold because I saw Seon Ahyun and Lee Sejin (Gold) right next to me.

Come to think of it, child actor Lee Sejin got the silver grade. Judging only by the general public's reaction, it's unlikely that he's making his debut.

“Isn’t it a little sad?”

So, I skipped over this close friendship with Lee Sejin (Gold). A little bit past the point of suspicion, the obstacle went down without any trouble.

“Not really.”

I answered calmly. I think he means that the stage location isn’t all that great for a platinum grade.

“Wow, I must have been very sad.”

“You deserve it.”

“Huh? Why do you think so?”

“Because you’re a good dancer.”

Lee Sejin’s dance was an A-. The vocals were a C+, and if he hadn’t messed up on the high notes, he might have gotten a platinum grade instead of me.

“Uhm, thank you!”

Anyway, Lee Sejin smiled widely as if he was feeling better. Then another voice came in.

“Can’t you dance?”

It was the platinum grade participant who stood at the center of the front row. The blank expression didn’t give the impression that the person had any ill intent toward me.

But the problem is that he was the one who came in first place in the ranking evaluation. And as far as I know, he was the final number one.

His name is Cha Eugene. He was so famous that I had seen his face on TV countless times while eating at the Baekban restaurant in Gosichon. (Baekban can mean simply steamed white rice or a full menu of rice, soup and side dishes. Gosichon is a Korean term used to refer to residents of civil service examinees.)

However, he was stranger than expected. How can he ask such a thing when the microphone and camera are both turned on?

With such a personality, he won first place.

Of course, the details in the status window and in every evaluation were great.

Nonetheless, there was a good chance that the broadcast editing was also favorable to him. Let's not get involved in this kind of material for nothing.

So I purposely laughed.

"Did you not see my evaluation?"

Then his expression turned sour. He seems to be the type of person whose conscience is prickled at this place, which is surprising.

"We have to prepare for our own performance. So I didn't really watch it."

"Then watch it next time and judge for yourself."

"All right."

Cha Eugene nodded his head, turned around, and looked ahead. Lee Sejin laughs with a look of bewilderment.

"I guess he has a unique way of speaking because he came from abroad?"

"I know."

The conversation didn't go further as Lee Sejin was also conscious of the camera.

Instead, I looked at the staff offstage. It seems to be getting solved as well.

"The rehearsal will start!"

The staff shouted. The setting seems to be complete.

I held my breath.

It was hard to wait on the floor while they packed equipment, but I didn't know I would have to do this myself.

It's 6 a.m. right now.

And they will record the actual performance at 4 p.m.

It seemed as if I was going to have a rough march.

* * *

It's currently 8 p.m.

This filming has been completed.

"Good job~!"

As I expected earlier… There was a lot of hardship.

"Whoo…"

"Ah… I will die."

One participant after another fell to the floor, making a sound of pain from the side. Everybody was dripping with sweat.

I was in the same condition as the other participants, but there was nowhere to sit down because the participants who had fallen first had filled the floor.

It was funny.

'I ran out of stamina.'

First, I rehearsed all morning and was exhausted. After that, I took a short break and then a lunch break.

The only thing on the menu was gimbap wrapped in silver foil. This was probably because they didn't have the necessary PPL yet.

After eating a bit, many stylists came to the filming set to do their jobs.

– Ah, I really don't have a place to put anything~

– Tilt your head this way!

– I'll do it quickly.

Even though they were annoyed by the poor conditions in the empty lot that was being used as a waiting room, they put make-up on the participants and smoothed their hair.

To be honest, there was no dramatic change for anyone, but it was enough for broadcasting.

After that, I put on a broadcasting uniform.

By this time, a camera was coming toward me.

– Do you like your clothes?

–… Yes.

Is there anyone here who would say no?

– What do you like about it?

– Since the design includes both uniforms and school uniforms, I think I can use it to make a variety of concepts.

I wish I could say it's a bit gross because 77 people are wearing the same clothes, but I can't.

As soon as I finished speaking, the participants around me started talking.

– I like that I can mix and match various accessories~

– Ah! It's good because it also goes well with the badge.

There might have been one or two camera shots here, but everyone was excited.

And the actual shooting.

Honestly, here— I don't know how the editing will go in.

– Let's do it again~

– Ugh…

I didn't think about that while I was dancing in a group in a place that was so hot that I thought I would get heatstroke about 30 times.

I think I've heard compliments, criticisms, and comments meant to motivate the participants, but it's all getting fuzzy in my head.

To be honest, my memory was vague. I don't know what kind of cut the production crew will use in episode 30.

I listened to the PD, trying to come to my senses.

"Everyone, you worked really hard—"

The main PD, who came out of nowhere at the end of the main stage, seemed to be giving empty compliments at first, but he gave some useful information after a few words.

"…And this performance will be on Music Night next Friday. You will start shooting again the next day. Until then, rest well and never forget that this is a great opportunity for you. You have to take this opportunity."

Anyone who sees it knows that they could grab the opportunity if the participants worked hard.

The participants responded enthusiastically to the PD, who could make the opportunity fit their liking.

"Let's work hard until the end."

“Yes!!”

“Then see you next week. You did a good job~.”

“You have worked hard!”

With their remaining strength, everyone cheers and claps. I applauded even though my hands were trembling.

“…”

Until next week’s Music Night monitoring, I guess I should build up my stamina first.

* * *

The week went by in an instant.

My plan to build up my stamina was only half successful. The reason for this is because after the first filming, I suddenly got a fever, and for the next three days, I stayed under the blanket and took medicine for it.

It seems that Park Moondae’s body couldn’t stand several weeks of hard work.

Anyway, when I woke up in three days, I ate more food and started practicing dancing and training my stamina at the same time.

I can now say that I’m working hard because I’m holding dumbbells while watching Music Night.

So let’s call it half a success.

[Siwon, did you enjoy SoulWe’s comeback stage with an exciting EDM?]

[Of course, Siwon is so excited that my heart feels relieved~]

[Are you kidding me? Whoo~]

[Whoooo~]

On the screen, two idols are hosting with joy.

They seemed to be reading the prompters with a lot of effort, yet they still managed to deliver the cringy script.

Even though they are both busy, it seems like they are trying to split the time.

[Siwon-ssi! Now, instead of making jokes, let's talk about the next stage, shall we?]

[Yes. Did you hear the news, Yoonji-ssi?]

[What kind of news is it?]

[The news that shareholders have been eagerly waiting for! Right away~ <Idol Joint-Stock Company> has been relisted!]

[Whoaa!]

It's about to start. I put the dumbbell down and picked up my phone to go back to the page I had been on before.

As a huge portal site created the viewer's fireboard, it was the best page to watch the general Internet reaction.

Since it was not even a famous singer's comeback week, the page was dominated by the topic 'Idol Joint-Stock Company.'

['MusicBOMB' talk talk!]

– It said re-listed ㅋㅋㅋ. Is this for real?

– Stop talking about it.

– Wow, pretending to be season 3!

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ It's not a re-listed; it's a delisted.

– What? Why are you here all of a sudden?

ㄴ IJC is launching a new season ㅋ

ㄴAh…

– ㅎ Am I the only one who came to see the comments instead of the boring performance?

Well, I did expect a lot of this kind of reaction.

Every time I clicked refresh, a different kind of ridicule poured out. It seemed that more people came than the previous Music Night's viewers.

And to sum up the reactions, they all said that Season 3 was going too far and would fail. Because Season 2 was too grand and flashy, the series seemed to have a strong reputation for being a failure.

As expected, there is also a mockery directed towards Season 2.

– This time, it's between guys? Are you going to be bigger in Korea? ㅋ

ㄴKorea doesn't allow same-sex marriages, so you can't beat the stronghold of season 2.^^ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

ㄴFuck ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

This is the main reason why Season 2 ends up destroying itself because it was a mixed audition for idols, with both men and women participating.

But when I think about it now, it was a strange idea.

I wonder what kind of silly thoughts the production team had.

It wouldn't have happened if they had made season 2 with a male version as the standard or if they had made the female version again.

If that's the way it is—.

– I don't know~ Who else might get pregnant before marriage and remain a legend in the idol audition world?

└ Ah ㅋㅋㅋ Two seasons in a row!

└ Now is the time to laugh but fuck. At that time, I was almost truly traumatized. Crazy bastards, why are you crawling out on an audition program to piss off the innocent viewers?

└ Huh sudden acceleration

└ They're too immersed in the entertainment industry~

└ Yeah, it's not just entertainment; it's an audition that wastes money~

└ Even with everything going on, it still makes me nervous to think about how IJC became the romance of the century.ㅎ

Yeah. It was a premarital pregnancy—.

Pregnancy before marriage at a time when even dating can be fatal.

It also broke out among the participants.

The bigger problem is that the two contestants whose premarital pregnancies broke out were popular contestants who were leading Season 2.

Since the production team already made it a mixed group, it seems like they thought it would be better to use it to get people's attention than to get rid of it right away.

That's probably why they worked hard to edit the rest of the show like a romance reality show.

But that wasn't the end of it.

– To say you were pregnant while walking on two legs, you must have been a lunatic who will never be seen again.

– It's really a legend in IJC… Oh, it's not IJC but RJC (Ruin Joint-Stock Company) ㅎ

The male participant in the scandal involving premarital pregnancy was actually dating another female participant.

The female participant said that she was going to put up with it for the sake of her career, but after watching the pink episode, she turned her back on it and told the media about the messenger.

After that— it was terrible.

Portal real-time search terms, entertainment news pages, and even social media were all a mess.

I just—remember that IJC Season 2 didn't make it to the finals and ended early.

In addition, as long as these huge scandals remain fresh in viewers' minds, no matter what they do at the beginning of the program, they will be subject to mockery.

I stopped thinking about the past and looked back at the screen.

In contrast to the crazy comments, the Music Night MCs were still smiling.

[Idol stocks waiting for shareholders to invest!]

[Shine your star!]

And here comes the famous catchphrase.

[Now, invest in idols who are about to fly high!]

The number of comments on the post suddenly tripled at that point.

– Fly high, stock… Fantastic skyrocket… ↖Fly… high↗

This was also once popular on the internet. It seems to have been used very often when a participant who was intended to be successful failed due to some unfortunate event.

These comments, which are getting close to becoming plastered, were filled with several lamentations.

– Wow, you're using this again.

– Whoever decided the phrase is really heaven sense.

– Really. It seems like the old man who was a piece of trash tried to act hip but failed.

– Don't make Siwon say those lines, you crazy broadcasting bastard ㅠㅠ

I laughed bitterly.

"But you still watch it."

They watch it to curse at them.

It was hundreds of times better than indifference. Because there's no doubt that these early viewers will help spread the word. Season 3 is a huge hit because it is based on facts that have already happened.

After all, it means that by the time the finals are over, most of them (to put it in an IJC way) will grab anyone's stock and watch it until they cry.

But it won't be like that from the first stage.

I was very excited about what reaction would come out again.

After the MC's words, the TV screen showed the stage a few seconds later.

Youngrin was standing on the stage. The pinpointed lighting made dramatic shadows with a clear outline on the face.

Well, at first, <Idol Joint-Stock Company> was in a humorous position with a black comedy and a heartwarming B-style, but it seemed like they were trying to change their image by becoming crazy.

Maybe they're trying to cover it seriously.

[All shareholders! Do you remember the last delisting?]

“…?”

They smashed my prediction as soon as Youngrin opened her mouth.

[Everyone, for making your stock into pieces of paper— I’m so sorry!!]

They put big subtitles in front of Youngrin, who shouted loudly.

[※This is an apology from the production team. Youngrin is not guilty.※]

[※We are still accepting claims for damages on our website.※]

“…”

Have they gone mad?

CHAPTER 10

They didn't even talk about last season during the first filming, so I never imagined that it would come out here.

The comments section is filled with "??!?" And then Youngrin naturally continued without changing her expression.

[To prevent the same disaster, the production team will give all the decision-making power to the shareholders!!]

The lights on the stage are turned on intensely one by one according to Youngrin's words.

[The members? Shareholders, please choose!]

[Number of people? Shareholders, please decide!]

[Do you want a team like this? Shareholders, please bind it!]

[Or…]

Like a stage effect, the lights began to flicker.

[Do you hate to see that team member look young? Then remove them!]

– Did the production team go crazy?

One appropriate comment caught my eye.

Under the flashing lights, Youngrin is delivering a serious closing remark.

[Our company's life and death depend on the shareholders!]

[<Idols Joint-Stock Company> re-listed is starting now!]

The camera moves upwards.

The stage, which looked like a big star, was lit up with flashing lights that looked like a galaxy.

And in the middle of the stage, I could see the back of ten people standing in the spotlight. These are platinum grade participants.

The camera moved up and down once, zooming in on the participants. Because the stage was so big, ten people seemed to fill it up completely.

The intro started as soon as the camera stopped moving.

One by one, the participants turned around, and the camera caught their movement.

It was a single part that was a benefit of the platinum grade, but it wasn't a big deal because it only took less than a second for each of them.

'I'd rather pick the center like the original.'

I felt a strange feeling as I saw my cut pass by.

'Hmm, it looks like hands and feet aren't as shriveled as that.'

After the intro and the song started playing, the gold grade appeared around the platinum grade. It seemed natural with the power of editing.

Entering the pre-chorus, the lighting changed, and silver grade appeared on both sides, then bronze grade appeared from behind at the beginning of the chorus.

And the group chorus.

"Oh."

It was plausible. Thanks to the ghostly cut of the moment when the choreography didn't match, the movement seemed in perfect order.

In addition, there was a surprisingly positive response in the comments section.

Although most people were embarrassed by the fact that they liked it.

– Why do I like the song?

– It's RJC, but the theme song is always a God song.

– What a waste of the song. You'll give me another stone ㅠ

Of course, they didn't forget to comment on the participants whenever there was a close-up on the screen.

– Such young skin… It's a bit uncomfortable to see. ㅠㅠ

– I thought it was funny that he just hit himself in the neck, but did you see it? ㅋㅋ

– As expected, your skills aren't good if you're ugly either. ㅎ

└Please stop generalizing, because it will make the squid sad. ㅠㅠ (t/n : it seems squid in this part means ugly people)

└ㅈㅅ Even if you're good at it, being ugly will make you look bad. ㅎ

└This bastard, really.

└ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

Of course, there were also moments of admiration.

– Wow, he was handsome just now.

– Wow, why are you here?

– How did you cast him?

– If he looked like that, he wouldn't come out here.

Roughly—it was a reaction that appeared when participants with an appearance stat of B or higher were close-up.

Oh, I just saw a close-up of Seon Ahyun. As expected, the camera catches the side with the best face.

…Wait.

I compared the responses in the comment box with the participants in the close-up.

"…Did I make a mistake?"

It becomes difficult if there is a significant gap between the beginning buzz volume.

'Putting singing and dancing to the side, should I have made my appearance to be an 'A' class?'

Even if they took only one close-up on the theme song stage, it would have been a hot topic if the appearance was great.

Also, if only a few homepage masters were holding on to them, they would have been photographed at a product presentation, and their photos would have been shared on social media. (t/n: 홈마 or homepage masters is a master of an (idol) fansite usually who takes photos. Basically means fansite masters.)

There is a good chance that the first elimination could have been avoided if the fan base was stronger.

Given that there is a status window, I should have been able to show my skills as a growth type, right?

Considering that this season was ridiculed at first and skyrocketed after it aired, I put this strategy aside— I had forgotten that mockery was also part of interest.

I felt a chill in my heart and looked at the stage screen again.

A few close-ups passed even at the ending.

The one that stands out the most is Lee Sejin, the child actor. I could tell the production team was willing to work hard because they gave him a few seconds

to develop the topic before the show.

When I think about it now, most of the debut members I know were of grade B or above, and their faces matched the set.

If the editing focused on participants with high visual stats, I'm in big trouble.

Park Moondae also looked pretty good, but he wasn't a man who stood out for his handsomeness.

As soon as I lost some confidence and tried to review my strategy, the screen suddenly changed. It was a mid-.

Then I heard a familiar voice.

[<Idol Joint-Stock Company>, relisted!]

Is this where the first ad appears?

Since filming was over a week ago, I thought they had enough time to edit it that way.

I focused on the because I was curious whether there was any hint of the editing direction.

[I hope there are many talented friends.]

[I have high expectations.]

[No (beep—) also comes out? The participants must be very nervous.]

It was a scene where the judges laughed and talked. I think they're saying everything that always comes out in the trailer.

[Amazing, it's just an amazing performance—]

[You look like you were born to do it.]

[Wow!]

[Where the hell did you come from now?]

Oh, my ranking evaluation has passed. This has reduced the worries of editing the whole thing. Only then did my shoulders drop a little.

It was my first mass media exposure, so I think I overreacted.

No matter how early it is, the battle usually doesn't happen until episode 4, so let's not be nervous and calmly add to my strategy.

Unlike me, who had regained peace of mind, the judges, who had hardened their faces, said harsh things without warning.

[Now this is… I can't even call it a stage.]

[You know that's an excuse, right?]

[It seems you just lacked preparation.]

[Aren't you embarrassed?]

And the faces of the participants, who were all showing serious faces and biting their lips, overlapped and passed one another.

…Looking at the background, it seems that they even use the expression they made since they were having a hard time practicing.

In the end, the cut made it look like something unexpected had happened.

[(Beep—) -ssi, (Beep—) -ssi, wait, wait—!]

[(The participant suddenly leaves the seat.)]

The face of the child actor Lee Sejin, who was crying, was shown up close.

[(The whole story?)]

As the screen went dark, the logo of Idol Joint-Stock Company came up magnificently.

The logo went off at the end of the changed theme song, and the MC's voice could be heard.

[The re-listing of the new Idol Joint-Stock Company! The first gateway to—(Beep—) evaluation!]

[Huh!]

The trailer ended with the participants covering their mouths as if they were shocked.

"…"

Comments kept pouring in as soon as I lowered my head.

It was understandable.

That evening, the Internet entertainment news comment box was turned upside down.

* * *

After finishing my workout, I warmed up my meal and accessed the portal website.

First of all, these were the titles of the articles that were shown on the main page.

[〈Idol Joint-Stock Company〉 who beg for forgiveness from the 'shareholders,' the new stock? 'Male Idol'.]

[Unveiled 〈Re-listed! Idol Joint-Stock Company〉, 'Shining Star' first release!]

['Please invest, shareholders!', the stage of 77 participants in the new season of 〈Idol Joint-Stock Company〉]

The title alone was moderately neutral, but public opinion can be seen by clicking on the article and looking at the response.

It's been a while since the comments section on entertainment news was blocked, and if you look at the emoticons that are visible, at least—.

'Frustrated' has exceeded 12,000. Obviously, they pressed this option instead because there was no 'Mad' expression, which meant that public opinion was going crazy.

There were also many columns.

[Idol Joint-Stock Company, adopting slogan for freedom]

['Buy me!', children who have become stocks.]

Let's click on one.

[It's not even *'Please pick me'* anymore. Participants are no longer treated humanely in the program shouting to buy your idol stocks. A sadistic way of handing over the right to escape from life to death—.]

Well, I don't need to see more.

Because most of the comments about the program on the Internet and SNS were negative.

– These bastards have no real reflection.

– Fuck, from the first season, they said it was stock with all kinds of things, and they sold our voting rights and came back without dying. Do you like the money you make from selling kids? ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

But the production crew will be delighted because it's not like the participants are criticized.

Season 2 was disappointing because the popular participant and the content were both messed up.

However, due to the program's sadism, they suppressed the image this season, and the production crew turned off the pointless behavior.

Anyway, the survival program was always hard, no matter how harsh or arrogant it was.

Even from the participant's point of view, catching people's attention might be better.

Because thanks to the popularity of the program, there are comments like this.

[This IJC 3 Platinum Grade Summary.]

: I captured the 'Music Night' stage. It's because I feel sorry for the kids who are good at this, so please refrain from cursing in the comments.

Most of the comments were about handsome participants or had good facial expressions, but I also noticed a few people talking about Park Moondae, which made me feel weird.

It was mainly about being cute or popular.

– Park Moondae is cute, so I watched the stage again, but the camera didn't do a good job of catching him. ㅠㅠ But after seeing the trailer, I think he did well on the ranking stage, so I'm thinking about watching it.

"…"

It felt weird. It was the first time in my life that I had read an article that expressed open interest in me.

I felt it when I was selling data in college, but I was surprised that people would give their time and money just because they were likable, even though they didn't know them well.

I'm not sure if it's because I live a life without time or money.

But when I became the person involved, it felt even weirder.

However, it wasn't a bad feeling.

'…What else should I do next?'

I suddenly wanted to move.

I carefully looked over the people's responses to the participants and then made a list of the priorities for future stat distribution.

It was then.

[The beginning of fame!]

1,000 people remembered your existence!

: Draw General Characteristics ☜ Click!

I got a notification for this, too.

I read the pop-up contents. The 'draw' below felt like the one that popped up on the stage last time.

I immediately click, and a slot machine pops up.

Again, the gray box and the copper box were mixed together this time.

This time, I hope there will be characteristics that help me quickly improve my looks or skills.

I waited for the slot to stop with more anticipation than last time.

And the moment the slot was about to stop, suddenly another pop-up appeared.

[Slot machine is a great success!]

: You draw hero characteristics!

CHAPTER 11

Suddenly, light burst out of the slot, and the movement from the silver box, which wasn't there, stopped.

"Hmm."

As soon as I saw the word "great success," I had a good feeling.

Will the characteristics be more effective this time? As long as it helps with the stage—.

[Acquired Characteristic 'I heard it's true(C)'!]

It causes emotional agitation to the 'listener'.

Activation rate 35%, basic activation state

How am I supposed to accept this characteristic that seems to be suitable only for people who try to lure other people?

But does this mean that it should attract public opinion on the Internet?

No, it can't be the case because *'listener'* is specifically mentioned.

Let's think about it for a while—.

"…"

When I calmed down, I thought it was a pretty good characteristic.

Due to the nature of the show, survival participants often talk directly to the audience during self-introductions and ranking announcement ceremonies.

It was a good characteristic because it would be advantageous for the viewer to feel anything rather than pass by casually.

In addition, the word ‘listener’ means that songs could also be used as a delivery method.

In this situation, it is definitely an advantage because it’s pretty simple to create a feeling of immersion while performing on stage.

Great. It’s better than nothing.

After organizing the situation quickly, I checked the status window.

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level: 8

Title: None

Vocal: A-

Dance: C

Visual: C+

Talent: C

Characteristics: Infinite potential, I heard it’s true(C)

!Status abnormality: Debut or die

Points Remaining: 1

One point was gained thanks to the achievement of <First Experience> when the first stage was broadcast.

And there were only three more episodes left until the achievement of practicing the song reached 500 times.

I’m going to level up today and get an extra point, and the points I already have will be distributed immediately.

The highest priority is—.

“Let’s take it for a visual.”

It’s time to break through the B-grade barrier.

Without hesitation, I adjusted the status window.

‘…I hope the number of comments will increase from the next content.’

I thought casually and got ready for bed early.

The filming will start again tomorrow. It starts early in the morning, so I should save my stamina from now on.

Based on the order, the first team match or self-introduction video will take place tomorrow.

* * *

“<Idol Joint-Stock Company> has started again! Participants, did you all have a good rest?”

“Yes!!”

What I expected was true. I looked around the filming set among participants who answered the MC’s question vigorously.

Signs were placed all over the auditorium, where they first showed the theme song.

When you watch last season’s game, you will know exactly where the first team battle would take place.

Aside from me, I could tell that some of the other participants were already paying attention to it and exchanging glances with each other.

I’m not sure if we can do it together, but it didn’t seem like a bad idea.

Should I cast someone too?

"…"

Come to think of it, I realize that none of the other participants was that close to me. So let's just focus on the MC's words.

"The stage everyone will be preparing for today is~ a team battle!"

"Whoa!!!"

As expected, everyone responded with a look like this.

"There must be some participants you'd like to team up with since this is the first team battle, right?"

When this kind of word comes, the following sentence will begin with "but."

"However! Idols need to be able to show teamwork no matter who they meet. In this evaluation, no one can team up with the people they like."

The program spoke well for having edited the first season to make it seem like the bullying was purposely done by them when it was all planned out from the start. Five of them experienced hell as a result.

"Then how do you form a team? First of all, please get the ball out of this box!"

"Why is it scary?"

Lee Sejin (Gold grade), standing behind me, whispered.

As far as I know, he was the only person that spoke to me at this place, and it felt like he was doing so to get a reaction cut.

Since the camera is moving, I can't just ignore it.

I nodded roughly, followed the person in front of me, and pulled the ball out of the box.

'Number 12.'

It seems like teams are formed by number or that teams are chosen in this number order.

"Participant number 1, who are you? Raise your hand! Ah, it's Participant Lee Hongsoo!"

A participant with a silver grade clumsily raised his hand. Then, the MC raised his hand and pointed to a sign placed in the auditorium.

"Participants can choose each sign when it's their turn!"

It was the latter. The MC smiled and drew his hand.

"Then, please reveal the content of the sign!"

Ping—!

The sign lit up, and text appeared. It was innovative in its own way, but the content is what really matters.

Each sign had the name of a famous agency written on it.

"Here are the names of agencies leading KPOP around the world! You just have to choose one of these agencies. However, the capacity is 14 people!"

The MC spread out his hands.

"However, if the quota is exceeded, the participant with the higher rank can push the participant with the lower rank and go in instead!"

"Wow, the rules are cruel."

Gold grade Lee Sejin talked to me again and made a big fuss.

"By any chance, can you not push me if I choose the same agency? I'm good, right?"

"…You're gold."

I couldn't understand why a high-ranking guy like him would think I would try to push him.

"Gold can be pushed from the Platinum!"

"…I won't push you."

"Oh~ the answer is cool."

"…"

Let's not get involved.

For reference, there were 5 signboards for the agency.

Unconditionally, 7 people can't stand at the sign and have no choice but to move to the corner.

Interviews are already expected to be included.

[It was really scary]

[Now it's real survival.]

"Then let's start with Participant Lee Hongsoo, who picked number 1!"

The first person stood in front of an agency known for its male idols.

My number is 12, so it's pretty early. Perhaps there was no need to push anyone.

However, it was quite difficult not to be able to check the team members in advance.

Because the quality of the stage and the direction of editing will change depending on who the team members of this first team match are, and the game will change afterward.

Aside from that, I didn't recognize any of the 11 participants who were called. It means that they didn't make their debut.

I had to use my brain well.

"Next participant, please move!"

I decided where to go after a lot of thought.

So far, the high-ranking participants have headed for the most picked sign.

Anyway, each agency had its own hit songs, so I shouldn't have any trouble with song selection as long as I pick the right ones.

So, the team members were more important than the agency.

People who are good at it will make the stage better, so this isn't a big enough sample, but let's figure it out based on the 11 people in front of me.

'First of all, I'm going to a place with many high-ranking participants.'

Two gold grade participants greeted me clumsily as I stepped forward with the ball in my hand.

It sounds like they were both talking about putting up the same sign.

They just said hello to each other but seemed happy to see each other.

They must be suffering a lot.

"Oh~ the main vocalist!"

I decided to be grateful for the above response as well.

Fortunately, both were participants who showed strength in dancing.

The problem was after that.

"Next is~ Ah, Participant Lee Sejin!"

Child actor Lee Sejin also picked up this sign.

Lee Sejin, holding number 15, approached with a stiff expression and stood behind the sign.

The two gold participants appear to have tried to welcome him again this time, but it was somewhat misunderstood due to Lee Sejin turning around and standing behind them.

“Aah—”

I heard a voice of embarrassment in front of me.

Well, it’s right behind me, so I’ll have to make a gesture like this.

Uhm, it’s right behind me, so I should do this kind of gesture.

I turned my head and bowed to the child actor Lee Sejin. Lee Sejin also nodded. It was an unfriendly reaction.

As expected, it doesn’t feel good. Will someone push this punk?

But after that, a bronze grade that was lower than the silver grade came out, and the chance of that happening was very small.

‘Damn it.’

And after a while, it was the 30s. Seon Ahyun, who was holding the number 33, came up and looked nervous.

“…”

Well, it’s good to have more Gold grades. He is a cooperative person. I gently waved my hand, and Seon Ahyun’s expression brightened.

It was a bit embarrassing.

The next impressive person to join was Platinum grade Ryu Chungwoo.

As a former player of the national archery team, he was one of the debut members I knew.

“Please take care of me!”

Ryu Chungwoo smiled as he stood in line as the 13th member.

There is only one person left.

Unfortunately, the 1st and 2nd place of debut members I knew went to different signs. It was the sign that the first participant went to, which was a sign for an agency that was known for its male idol.

Because of the agency’s overwhelming popularity, the first number of participants had to be pushed back eventually.

There were many people, like the number 1 member Cha Eugene, who got a lot of attention after their debut and first performance.

Even the silver grade was pushed back there.

“I’m sorry.”

The participant in the silver grade who had been pushed and was half heartedly nodding his head walked up to the sign. He looked extremely miserable.

“…”

For reference, that punk is Choi Wongil.

He was fighting hard but didn’t do well on the ranking evaluation, so he fell to a silver grade. However, it seemed like his mentality had really exploded.

Maybe it’s just how I feel, but I don’t think he wants to look at me.

“Huh, you have to push someone to get in now. All 14 people have been taken.”

“Gosh.”

The first two people in line, who were both Gold participants, nodded.

…Gradually, I began to worry about the members of this team.

What was worse, the one who was pushed back from the 60s and got back was this punk.

“I will give out the name… Bronze grade participant Jung Hyeongjung. I’m really sorry!”

Gold grade Lee Sejin chose this sign.

Lee Sejin, who kept his head down, was the first person to push the other participant away and join this sign.

Because he was sorry and behaved well, everyone seemed willing to do so.

“Oh, Moondae~ Are you going to be the main vocalist?”

“Of course, whoever fits it best will do it.”

“Wow, that’s cool~ ‘whoever fits it best will do it’~.”

“…”

I would have swung my fist at him if it weren’t for the camera.

I looked at Lee Sejin but didn’t say anything. Instead, he grinned and hit me on the back before moving to get in line.

I feel like I was wrongly accused—.

“Everyone, have you all picked the sign you want?”

The movement didn’t end until the remaining people who had been pushed out of different places were given new signs.

After Lee Sejin (Gold) joined, the only change at the sign I was standing on was that one silver participant pushed a bronze participant.

So, this is a summary of the grade for each participant.

– Platinum 2 people, Gold 5 people, Silver 5 people, Bronze 2 people.

Overall, it was the best distribution except for the top team. However, it seems that the members were also subtly satisfied with it.

Of course, it will not end here.

“I guess you want to choose the best song now!”

“Yes!”

There were 14 people, but there was no way to put them all on one team. So they will be divided into 7 people.

First of all, the person I definitely want to avoid and the person I want to be with —.

I turned my head away. Then, coincidentally, I made eye contact with Ryu Chungwoo.

Ryu Chungwoo nodded slightly. It looked like he was also planning to make this team into a high-ranking team. Good. So, let’s do our best to avoid any rudeness —.

“Well, before that… Whoever picked the first sign, please raise your hand!”

Participants who were standing right behind the signs raised their hands.

MC said with a smile.

“For participants who raised their hands, please press the button above the sign!”

“Yes?”

“A sign?”

“Button, ah, square over there, uh, that’s it.”

The participants murmured to each other, and each found a button at the top of the sign and pressed it.

Suddenly, the sign’s content began to flicker and then change.

“Oh, what’s that?”

“Is it a lottery number?”

On the sign screen, there were two rows of seven numbers each. It was the same as the sign of the agency I was in.

[4, 7, 12, 15, 33, 37, 62]

[17, 24, 27, 38, 41, 59, 72]

“Can you see the number on the sign?”

“Yes!”

“I can see it!”

“If you buy a lottery ticket with that number!… Haha, I was joking. By that number, you become a team!… Everyone, do you remember the number of balls drawn in the starting order?”

“…!”

“You’ll now be on the same team in the order written on the sign. And you’ll perform against the other team in a one-on-one match!”

In an instant, the studio was filled with noise.

“Oh, hey, what’s your—I was number 5, right? Oh my.”

“Wow, what is this…”

“Did we split up?”

This sign was no different. When he pressed the button for the first time, the gold grade participant cheered and hugged the same gold grade participant immediately behind him.

As expected, the two of them came here to do it together.

Then they looked back at me and shouted.

“Hyung-nim! Number 12~ We’re on the same team!”

“Wow, great! You got the main vocal!”

Then, someone grabbed me from behind and hugged me along with the gold grade participants.

“I think I like our team?!”

It was a gold grade Lee Sejin. I see. Number 62 was that punk.

I tried to match the order of the team members among the three people who made more fuss on purpose.

First of all, number 33 is Seon Ahyun.

Well done. I turned back and spoke with Seon Ahyun before slipping out of the three.

I was almost annoyed by how uncomfortable I felt.

“I look forward to your kind cooperation.”

Seon Ahyun nodded hard. Okay, who’s on the rest of the team?

It would be great to have Ryu Chungwoo, who is both a platinum grade and a debut member, but the number 37—.

“…”

It wasn't him. Number 37 was Choi Wongil. Clearly, he was standing this way awkwardly with the order ball.

On the other hand, Ryu Chungwoo seemed to have gathered a number of people there and was about to start a briefing.

'I'm doomed.'

And the 15s—.

Damn it, it was the child actor Lee Sejin.

Likewise, he was looking at the three gold grade participants there with eyes that refused to talk.

I screwed up. It's going to be edited out.

No matter what I expected, the ranking seemed to be very good.

Because of this, Seon Ahyun added a voice with a rare happy tone.

"I, I, I think the team members are good."

"…"

Yeah, you should think positively too.

CHAPTER 12

“Yeah~ We’re so good, right? There are a lot of talented people, and there are a lot of good-looking people!”

Gold grade Lee Sejin said with a big smile. Everyone felt embarrassed, but they all nodded as if they agreed.

Even if everyone pretended to be as harmonious as they were, it was a natural thing because it was the right time to grow up. It’s a relief to see that everyone has at least some sense.

“But, ah, Actor Sejin. We have the same name—. How do we differentiate ourselves?”

“Yes?”

“Oh, that’s nice!”

“Right? Since you’re an Actor, how about Bae Sejin?” (T/n: I think they take 배 from 배우 which means actor for this part.)

The gold grade participant who joined first grinned and added.

“Hey, then, because you’re big, you will be Big Sejin.”

“Big Sejin? Hey, that’s nice. Call! What do you think? Sejin Hyung-nim?”

“…”

Child Actor Lee Sejin bit his lip as if he was holding back something, and said it.

“I just like my name.”

“…”

“Ah—. I see.”

The excitement disappeared in an instant. Then Gold grade Lee Sejin hurriedly opened his mouth.

“Oh, that’s fine. Then, Hyung and Dongsaengs, please call me Big Sejin from now on~”

“It’s nice~.”

“What a nice nickname!”

Clap clap clap. The atmosphere was set with applause. Then, around the time each person introduced themselves, the MC picked up the microphone again.

“Participants, did you say hello to each other?”

“Please let us choose whatever song we want.”

One of the team members muttered desperately. But there was no chance.

“Now then— let’s start the song selection!”

“Whoa—”

“The song selection is random—”

Everyone murmurs with tired looks.

The MC waved his hand out and said humorously.

“Ey, everyone! This is one of the hit songs of the representative idols of the agency you picked! Don’t be disappointed!”

They might have thought it was worth doing, so the atmosphere has gotten better.

“Now, the representative song will start playing at the sign in front of you. If you want to stop, just press the switch! Then, the first participant to join the sign,

please come forward!”

The team members immediately changed their attitude.

“Hyung-nim, I will trust you!”

“The only way to live is a masterpiece song!”

“Phew, do I have to show my ability again?”

The first participant stepped forward in front of the sign with a cheer.

“Now, get ready… launch it!”

“Whoaa!”

A team member made a strange noise and immediately pressed the switch. Big Sejin (Since he brought this up himself, I’m going to call him this from now on) murmured next to me.

“No, we should’ve seen it and pressed it—”

The titles of a few songs were shown on a sign that rolled slowly.

[Tiger / VTIC]

[LIFE / VTIC]

[Eternal Song / VTIC]

VTIC. At the moment, they are the male idols whose albums sell the most copies.

“Everything is fine… please.”

Choi Wongil’s desperate murmuring was heard at the end. I waited patiently for the screen to stop.

The screen then slowly stopped.

[Into A New World / MallangDalkom]

"…?"

"……??"

"……!?"

A terrible silence fell.

Except for myself, all of the team members' eyes became like 'BONOBONO' as they looked at the sign. (t/n: Bonobono (보노보노) is a character in a manga.)

"I, is it an error?"

The team member who touched the sign mumbled something in a puzzled voice. However, there was no response from the production staff.

It meant it was real.

"Is it include female idols?"

"Are there any female idol songs?"

Everyone, including us, was saying similar things.

Of course, the reaction was not as strong as ours.

The people on the team muttered as if they were crazy.

"Yeah… So, was it a flower fairy?"

"That… uh, debut song, uh-huh."

Undoubtedly, *'Into A New World'* was an innocent and dreamy song that stood for a flower fairy.

Besides, it's a debut song. A song that has never been number #1 on public television since it came out before MallangDalkom's concept changed into

something cute and bitter.

“Ah! Thank you!”

“This is amazing!”

The surrounding area was filled with cheers as if there was a good song. It was natural because it would have been full of masterpiece songs. But the climax came from here.

“Aaaaah!!”

“Hyung!! Hyung!!”

The team next to our sign picked “Tiger” by VTIC.

For reference, that song was the title track of the album that received *Daesang* at the largest music site awards ceremony in Korea two months ago.

I could say that it’s one of the most popular songs right now.

Maybe that’s why everyone was hugging and making a fuss. The grade of the team members was low, so the atmosphere improved greatly as if they had already won.

“…”

And our side is getting very quiet. It looked like no one could get over the shock.

What am I going to do?

‘I was avoiding this.’

I was sweeping my chest. This is because I realized that I chose the sign of the agency with ease.

VTIC’s *‘Tiger’*?

I just can’t do it.

I was lucky enough to avoid it.

In that way, the match's luck is great right now.

'It seems like everyone hasn't realized it yet.'

When I saw the team members gathering in a depressed mood, I thought it was rather good.

If there's a sense of crisis, they'll work cooperatively.

* * *

"I think the key doesn't match."

Did I think they would work cooperatively? I'd like to say that I was wrong to have such high expectations.

Already, a man who seems to have given up on everything has started to show up.

"Wongil-ah, if you try it again—"

"I've tried it again a few times, and I don't think it's going to work again—"

Choi Wongil lowered his head gloomily and said this.

"That, it was originally a female song, but we changed it to a male key, so I don't think it fits well. I think I can do the high part—"

He looks at me while talking like that.

'You want my part.'

I was wearing the main vocal badge early on, and the three gold grade participants were cheering me on.

Choi Wongil was quiet and only watched me put on my badge, maybe because he got a low grade.

Then he found a place where he could stretch his feet, so he stretched them.

I laughed bitterly.

“Shall we?”

“…!”

Big Sejin hit my thigh. This is really—.

“Hey, don’t play around with the kid. At times like this, you have to help him sing his part! What are you doing?”

People talk about it as if it’s a joke, which is only natural. It’s not something he did once or twice.

‘Indeed, he’s not just a good punk with no shame.’

I hid my doubts and spoke again firmly.

“No, I really don’t mind changing it. If you are going to do it, you should do it at the beginning before you learn the choreography.”

“R, really?”

“Yeah.”

I calmly ended the conversation. Choi Wongil looked very suspicious, but he quickly nodded because he was afraid I might change my mind.

“Well, then I want to do the first verse chorus—”

“Okay, then I’ll do the bridge part.”

“Yes?”

“Let’s change parts. That’s the part where you say you can’t do it.”

Choi Wongil nodded his head reluctantly. He didn't seem to want me to take part that he couldn't.

He wanted to take the chorus, but he didn't want to let go of his part.

I don't believe it was because he is unable to put things away in the right order, but was falling into silver grade the trigger? It tasted a little off.

Big Sejin looked at Choi Wongil and me alternately and sighed quietly.

'I must have taken the 1st chorus in the picture he drew.'

Then he pretended not to, and continued energetically.

"Okay, then the part would be like this."

There was one main position left. They felt nervous as if they weren't gold grade participants.

"Now all we have to do is choose the main dancer."

Before Big Sejin spoke more, I raised my hand.

"Oh, I have an opinion."

"Yeah?"

"If everyone is okay, I want to decide the direction of the arrangement before choosing the main dancer."

"…Huh?"

An arrangement.

Even though it was the most important topic, everyone was unconsciously avoiding it.

'Into A New World' is an innocent female idol song.

And *'innocent'* is—it was a very difficult concept to digest.

People often think that it is easy to do as long as it looks pretty, but that is not true at all.

This is because it's a concept that is difficult to make look strong.

In order for them to leave such an impression on the audience with such a song while they were competing on the survival stage, they had to be exceptionally talented or incredibly good.

Maybe everyone thought that far, but the opinion of the arrangement started out like this.

"A little… How about changing the lyrics and going strong?"

"With a strong beat?"

"yes. It's perfect for a new world~ with so much ambition to do it!"

The first gold—. It's annoying to call it this way. Should I call him Gold 1 appropriately?

So, this was Gold 1's opinion. This is something that any participant in a survival show who is thinking can come up with.

Strong change.

The problem is that it looks like it would be difficult for this song to give the impression of being "full of ambition," as the saying goes.

The lyrics of *'Into the New World'* are like this.

– At some point, I realized

I wandered in an imperfect time

In this unstoppable maze of time

Please save me from being trapped in it

It's withering away gradually.

In this little space inside (little flower~)

I'm waiting for the day it will bloom again

Please come to find me

This is the first verse.

If you want to be ambitious, you need to change the lyrics so that they focus more on the speaker. If you don't, the song's story gets messed up from the pre-chorus on.

This is because the chorus of this song is about asking the other person to come to you quickly.

– One step, two steps

The sound of you coming

It's ringing in my ears

Don't hesitate and give me your hand

Now, I'm going into a new world~

Come to me

Come to me

It's dazzling, a paradise by your side

Come to me

Come to me

Melody of love for you (continues)

“Then do we have to change the lyrics of ‘Come to me’ after ‘Into A New World’?”

“Uh… if we say ‘come to you’…”

Gold 1 muttered and scratched his head. He seems to have realized that the problem is not only that.

“Then, shouldn’t we have to change everything from ‘Save Me’?”

“Mhmm.”

Yes. Since the chorus is so focused on what the listener does, changing that to “I’m coming quickly” takes away from the meaning of the next lyrics.

“If we’re going to do this, we’ll have to change the whole thing.”

“Yeah… But if we make too many changes, we might suffer from fairness.”

It was also a question of whether the opposing team or the production staff would allow them to fix everything like that.

“…”

The team members got quiet as they slowly realized how serious the situation was.

Big Sejin quickly intervened and changed the subject.

“Why don’t we discuss the arrangement with the teachers and decide? I think it would be better to learn the choreography as soon as possible to get feedback! Is it okay, Moondae-ya?”

“Yeah, it’s fine. Let’s do it.”

I obediently agree. Anyway, the idea of bringing up the arrangement at this point was meant to shock them.

The more desperate the atmosphere is, the less noise will come out when I give my opinion about the arrangement.

“Okay, let’s play the choreography video!”

When Big Sejin played the dance video, everyone turned their heads to look at the tablet PC screen.

No matter where they hear the chorus, no one on the team probably remembers the choreography in detail.

However, as expected, less than 15 seconds after the choreography video started, everyone gave out voices.

“Ah—”

CHAPTER 13

"…The dance?"

Ballet and modern dance movements appeared from the opening choreography of *'Into A New World.'*

It's dim and dreamy, but it's also, as expected, not very intense.

"It's pretty, but—"

Gold 1, who had opened his mouth, was speechless.

In other words, the difficulty of arrangement has again gone up vertically because of this choreography.

Following the lyrics played over and over, they began to learn the choreography in an atmosphere very similar to a house in mourning.

"Let's get it as soon as possible!"

"Yes!"

However, it was surprisingly nice to practice because everyone closed their mouths and worked hard. This may have been because the hopelessness of the future made everyone feel like they were in a crisis instead of desperate.

They also seemed to know that if they complained for no reason, their negative comments about the song could be broadcast.

'It's nice because it's comfortable.'

I continued to practice silently without saying a word.

Anyway, I had zero experience with choreography, so I couldn't say that I was particularly impressed by what I saw, as it was all the same to me.

“Here, if you grab my arm and turn it like this—”

“Uhm.”

“Oh, it was similar.”

And waited for the right timing.

Now that the atmosphere has been set, the thing that really matters is the picture, which should be so powerful that the editors won’t want to remove it when they’re editing. It was also important how the arrangement process came out on the program.

The chance came two days later when the trainer came to check on them.

* * *

“You must have been very worried when you got this song, right?”

At the choreographer’s words, the team members laughed awkwardly. They can’t say that they just learned the choreography without putting their worries out of their minds.

The choreographer didn’t seem to like this response very much, but for now, he didn’t say anything about it.

“Let’s start by seeing what you’ve done.”

“Yes!”

And the team members, including myself, finished the first verse choreography without any mistakes.

“Whoo…”

People who were breathing hard around me let out a sigh of relief when they thought there were no mistakes.

“…Well.”

The choreographer nodded. It was a fairly neutral move.

“How did everyone memorize the movements? Who got the choreography?”

“Uh, the team members who are a little more used to dancing and all together…”

“Yes. We did it all together!”

Big Sejin added words to Gold 2.

The 4 Gold indeed took the lead, but Seon Ahyun was the one who did the most. I found out that he was a dance major.

Well, he wasn’t completely alone, and the main dancer became Big Sejin, so it looked like he would crush it to the extent.

The choreographer just nodded.

“Yeah, you’ve worked hard. But—”

The choreographer snapped his neck.

“I can’t see anyone.”

I could hear Gold 2 taking a breath right next to me. Whoever sees it would think a ghost came out.

“What are you going to do? It’s just ‘They’re dancing. They’re doing this move. They’re doing that move.’ This is a compliment you might hear at a school trip talent show, but didn’t you come here to make money with this?”

The team members flinched whenever the words came out.

“It’s not worth watching.”

In fact, it was a natural result since they didn’t try to figure out what the song meant and only learned the choreography mechanically. Still, the choreographer kept saying the same thing, like using abusive language instead of advice.

“There are kids who are below the level at all.”

It was obvious to look at actor Lee Sejin while he was speaking. Lee Sejin was bowing his head.

To be honest, I was at a level where I could barely remember the choreography, but should I think it’s a good thing that they become human shields for me?

There was constant feedback to the point that it wouldn’t be strange for one person to be dragged on.

The choreographer openly moved his mouth.

“You, Seon Ahyun.”

“Y, yes…”

“I heard you majored in modern dance. But why does it seem like you’re weaker than Moondae?”

Seon Ahyun’s face turned pale.

I had a strong feeling that they would never edit those comments.

This punk who will get hair loss—was he trying to intentionally shock him by making a comparison between myself and the person who couldn’t do that right now?

“That kid sings well. You’re auditioning here, so the feedback has been positive so far. But if you make your debut, someone will write a story about you, but do you think someone will tell you you did a good job?”

There aren’t many fields that are as skilled at storytelling as the entertainment industry, but those who work in it like to play it cool and insist that they are judged only based on their skills.

It was still the same. No matter what, it looked like it hurt Seon Ahyun a lot, and he looked like he was about to sink.

''This is a bit difficult—'

He was already in strange condition, but I'll get in trouble if he couldn't do his part because it got worse.

"Anyway, your current level is just an amateur who practiced a little. Think about what you want to convey through this song, and then perform it again while you're in a state where you're worth watching."

"Thank you…"

The team members walked quickly out of an evaluation room as if they were mop.

They already had no lives.

However, a similar situation occurred in the following vocal feedback.

"Guys. What do you guys want to do?"

Mudie tapped on the keyboard as if she were frustrated and sorry. But, instead of attacking a person, she poured out specific instructions. It seems like she really wants to give advice.

"The concept of this song is the fairy of flowers. It's a clear and beautiful song. But all you're doing is singing the notes. It had neither a beautiful nor a sad feeling. Isn't it embarrassing for you to sing it that way?"

"…"

Aside from the fact that this song wasn't suitable for an audition program, I honestly wondered if there were any team members who didn't think of that. But, of course, it was because they are around the age of high school students.

But I can't honestly say that I'm embarrassed, so this is the answer.

"Since it was an audition, we wanted to arrange with a stronger feeling—. Because the concept of the song is so pure, it's difficult to naturally change it to a stronger direction."

“If the arrangement seemed hard, you should have thought about trying to keep the original song as close as possible.”

“…”

Mudie waved one hand with a sad expression.

“Guys. First, you have to know which direction you want to go.”

And as soon as the production team stepped in to help, the team members began discussing the situation immediately.

The camera was close to the front, and the production team was sitting in front of it. Unfortunately, the atmosphere was so bad that we couldn’t even say anything.

But someone had to say something, so the guy with the armband was the first to speak up.

It was Big Sejin.

“Uhm, we worked really hard these two days. Thanks to it, we learned the choreography quickly. I believe we can do well enough with the quality of the stage if we immerse ourselves in the song with that momentum from now on.”

It was a natural comfort as if he had prepared for it. Look at this punk?

“Let’s not get distracted and work hard to keep the original song’s meaning! It may be a little embarrassing, but naturally, if we do our best— it’s like a hit song by MallangDalkom Sunbaenim, wouldn’t it be fun?”

“Ah, just like Moondae did?”

“That’s it! If you’re humorous and pure, you’ll also feel fresh. Why don’t we just make the beat a little faster to make it more exciting?”

In the end, he suggested that we should shamelessly overdo the song of the innocent female idol and that we should digest it in the same way as MallangDalkom’s cute concept did back in its heyday.

'…I think he really prepared this.'

At that moment, I realized. This punk was waiting like me.

'He left it alone on purpose until the trainer gave them feedback.'

Because if he tells them to stick with the original song, which has a more innocent concept, there will definitely be people who disagree with his decision.

It also eliminates the possibility that Seon Ahyun, a major who fits the original song, will be the main dancer.

He picked the episode cuts that were like this and took the impact of being the leader.

It wasn't an ordinary skill.

But that's too bad. It would be useless for this guy to draw a big picture.

Because my opinion was better.

First, let's throw the bait.

"The idea is good, but wouldn't it seem like a mockery of the original song if we make a mistake?"

Still, it's a senior idol's song. I didn't know what people would say if we went too far and looked ridiculous.

Of course, I did not expect this objection, Big Sejin replied with a smile.

"We just have to do our best to make sure it doesn't look like that!"

"Isn't Moondae Hyung doing too much?"

"…?"

Suddenly, Choi Wongil stepped forward and interrupted the conversation.

“Uhm, Wongil-ah?”

Big Sejin rarely looked embarrassed.

Rather than being supported, it’s a fun development in which I gain more from being attacked.

I can hear the Big Sejin’s big picture shattering.

Choi Wongil poured out angry remarks to Park Moondae.

It seems that he keeps forgetting that there are cameras.

“Does Hyung have any great ideas? You may feel at ease because the trainers like you, Hyung, but you also need to think about how the other team members feel. If you just oppose it so blindly—”

Oh, that’s a surprisingly plausible statement.

“Oh, of course I do. My opinion.”

“Yes…?”

“I’ve been thinking about it, but it seems like there’s a way to go strong while keeping the feeling of the original song.”

“…?”

“Is there such a thing?”

The sudden idea of idealism surprised the other people on the team.

In contrast to Choi Wongil’s momentary dissatisfaction with the atmosphere, which was quickly resolved, Big Sejin put his hand on the back of his head in an embarrassment.

This punk is really not normal.

“Of course, it’s good if it’s real— but what is it?”

I said with a smile.

“Let’s mix it with horror.”

“…!”

Let’s go not just as a flower fairy, but as a flower fairy who went to America.

After a short period of silence that was followed by an exclamation mark, a reaction erupted.

“O, oh! I think it’s good?”

“Hey, I think this choreography would be really scary if we added a horror concept!”

“Oh—”

From Gold 1, who shouts Eureka while roughly swaying the choreography he memorized with his hands, to Lee Sejin, whose expression looks better, the majority of the responses were positive, though the level varied.

At this age, if you were an aspiring idol, you would want to do something cool rather than something terrible, so I figured it would be better to say horror.

Big Sejin also gave a brief exclamation and then nodded his head. He turned right after seeing the member’s opinion.

“It’s a little embarrassing to say this right away, but—I think I like Moondae’s opinion?”

“Wow, he gave up his opinion and switched!”

“As expected from a leader!”

The atmosphere brightened in an instant. Behind the buzzing team members, Mudie could be seen with a happy expression.

Since Mudie is also caught on camera, I think that cut will also be used—. I hope it's well cut and edited.

But there was a guy who messed up the heartwarming cut scene.

Choi Wongil was— anxious, but it wasn't him.

When he came to his senses, he seemed to be worried about how his actions would turn out to be edited.

He is trying to get into the mood somehow, but he tries not to look at me because he is too proud to apologize.

If it were me, I would say that I was too harsh, sink into the situation, and end it.

We're in a situation where the opponent has to accept me, but I don't know why he's acting this way.

Maybe because he was young, he didn't know how to get along with other people.

Then who is the culprit, Seon Ahyun?

"Ghost! Let's go with ghosts! There's a flower with a story about a dead person."

"What kind of horror movie is this? I think you're too serious? Ah! You know the movie, the black swan if you do it with that creepy feeling—"

"Wow, the choreography would be really scary if you do that."

In what looked like a happy episode of the group project, Seon Ahyun was stuck in the corner with a gloomy expression.

"…"

Perhaps because of what the choreographer trainer said, it seemed that he couldn't recover his mental condition.

I had a moment of hope that Big Sejin would come out and show what a true leader looks like, but there was no sign of that happening.

Seon Ahyun seems to be afraid that when he comes to his senses, he will be mistaken for the main dancer with a major's buff.

The rest are just guys with bright minds or lack social skills, so am I the only one who doesn't need to be checked because my positions don't overlap?

It can be so annoying— I was frustrated that I had to do something for a mental protector that wasn't in my fate.

In any case, the fact that the stage quality has decreased is a source of great regret. So let's get some words out.

CHAPTER 14

After the most hectic and optimistic discussion of the past two days, I talked to Seon Ahyun during a short break.

“Are you tired?”

“N, no—”

Seon Ahyun shook his head with a nervous face. He seemed nervous because he was worried that he would be scolded if his condition wasn’t good enough.

Could I approach him this way? I opened the conversation as gently as possible.

“Then, is it because you were worried about the feedback during the choreography evaluation?”

His apology came right away.

“…I, I, I’m sorry… I, I will work hard…”

This guy really looks like a sunfish. My heart becomes magnificent. (t/n: Sunfish means extremely fragile, while my heart becomes magnificent is an expression when you feel touched by something.)

“You don’t have to be sorry for me. And please don’t misunderstand about this.”

Let’s try to explain the saying, *‘The choreographer has a personality problem, so he motivated people by attacking them.’*

“The dance trainer didn’t say that because he really thought I was better than you. It must have been meant to provoke you.”

I sat next to Seon Ahyun and kept talking to make the atmosphere more relaxed.

“I think he was disappointed because he thought you could do better. Because he was originally a strong talker.”

“…”

Seon Ahyun couldn’t answer, as if he couldn’t say something stupid like, *‘No, you’re better than me.’* to me. Do you also think my words are plausible?

“D, do you really think… I, I can do well?”

“Hmm?”

Are you asking me?

He must have calculated it and asked because I couldn’t say, *‘The choreographer is the choreographer, but I don’t think so.’*— no, it must not be it.

I crossed my arms and spoke calmly.

“Why would I lie?”

“…!”

Seon Ahyun swallowed his saliva and asked back in a slightly anticipated voice.

“T, t, then… H, how can I d, do it well…”

“…Are you asking for my opinion?”

“Y, yes!”

Seon Ahyun nodded eagerly.

‘Are you asking for advice from a beginner who started his career through auditions?’

I tried to hide how cold I was feeling by coming up with a theory based on Seon Ahyun’s status window.

“I think you are thinking too much.”

Seon Ahyun seemed shocked.

“U, u, useless…”

“It’s not that your thoughts are useless. I think you’re even thinking about things that you don’t need to think about. How about clearing your head?”

Let’s add a more specific example.

“Just think ‘I’m going to make this happen’.”

“…”

Seon Ahyun seemed to be lost in thought. What a contradictory response for someone who has just been advised to clear his mind.

Anyway, the words that came out immediately were positive.

“O, okay… I will do it.”

His face showed his determination, so it didn’t seem like he was saying empty words.

But he seems to be burning with passion more than I expected? There was also strength in the shoulders.

Besides, he even mumbles something—it was probably something like *‘I can do this’*.

“…”

Hmm, did I have any talent for advice to this extent?

As soon as I started having doubts, the status window popped.

[‘When I heard it, you’re right (C)’ activated!]

-Target: Seon Ahyun

-Effect: Activation of characteristics by successful persuasion

I see. It looks like the probability of this 35% was shown.

I didn't know I could use it this way—but it seemed quite useful due to the nature of this program.

Of course, this is assuming that it opened through 35%.

First, I turned on Seon Ahyun's status window to see exactly what had changed.

[Name: Seon Ahyun]

Vocal: B- (A)

Dance: A (EX)

Visual: A+ (S+)

Talent: B (A+)

Characteristics: Grit (A)

!Status abnormality: Lack of self-esteem deactivated.

Status abnormality deactivated?

Earlier, the pop-up said that some characteristics were activated. Is that the effect?

Let's check the characteristics.

[Grit (A): To make one's mindset. Burn up the concentration and press the negative state.]

– When activated, one status abnormality (highest priority) is canceled.

Isn't this characteristic a fraud?

If I had this characteristic, I would have deactivated them and withdrawn from the audition if I couldn't make my debut.

I was so angry that I couldn't think straight.

After some time had passed and vocal practice continued, I was able to sort things out calmly.

Anyway, can Seon Ahyun use his skills as it is in that status window?

Just in time, Mudie praised Seon Ahyun's vocal.

"Ahyun, you just made the right sound!"

"T, thank you…!"

Even when I just listened, it sounded better than when he practiced. It's probably starting to sound more and more like his B stats.

'Hmm.'

It was good that Seon Ahyun came to his senses, and the stage quality improved. But I shouldn't let him come out by himself too hard.

'Even if our positions don't overlap, it's difficult for me if he eats all the buzz by himself.'

I guess I'll have to come up with a stage quantity that can appeal individually.

It was necessary to contribute to the quality of the stage and, at the same time, be able to eat the impact alone.

"So, horror? If you do well, I think that direction will be good. What are you going to do?"

After the team members were excited about Mudie's question and discussed the arrangement direction, I raised my hand.

“I have an opinion on the arrangement of my part. Can I say it?”

“Oh, Moondae~ Where is it?”

“This part.”

I put my finger on the lyrics.

“The bridge.”

Choi Wongil, who was standing next to me, could be seen with his mouth wide open.

Thank you for the part Wongil-ah. I will use it well.

* * *

Season 3 of <Idol Inc.> was burning on the Internet with ridicule and criticism that it would fail.

At this point, only the profiles of the participants and the first stage were revealed. Although the production presentation has not yet been held, the Tnet broadcasting company’s website has already begun recruiting an audience for the first team match.

Although it was due to a problem in the order of filming, thanks to the overflowing buzz, there was quite a bit of competition in selecting applicants for the audience.

And here, a person broke through the competition rate (27:1) and came to the audience proudly!

‘I won’t get caught, right?’

Now that she sees it, she doesn’t have confidence.

While swallowing saliva, a small bag that was easy to carry and a camera were hidden in her backpack under a cardigan covered with a smoke screen.

There was some reason why she had to come to the audience and hide the camera.

Because she had a hunch as soon as she saw <It's Me>, the first stage of this season's Idol Inc.

This might work!

'This atmosphere—I'm sure they're being criticized right now, but when the broadcast starts, all of this may turn into interest. As long as the kids who come out are fine!'

Then the value of the pictures she takes now will be soaring!

It was half a gamble. However, the original soaring stock gamble was dominant in her mind. Furthermore—.

'…If there's someone really good, it's good for me to be fansite master early on.'

At the same time, her (former) idol was destroying her pride by getting into social media in a dirty way, so she wanted to use this chance to clean up her own account.

So today, she had to take as many pictures as possible because she didn't know which participant would explode at the stage.

She calmly waited for the filming to begin.

Filming began after the MC, who changed from a public broadcast announcer to a talent, came out on stage and delivered a few words of advice.

"In this stage, the two teams that covered the songs of senior idols from the same agency will compete. The winning team will receive a huge benefit. The benefits are… please watch the show!"

Even though people vowed on oath not to reveal spoilers until the show aired, so many people were talking about it on the Internet that they didn't want to say anything except on the stage.

“Idol Inc. Season 3, the long-awaited first team battle begins now! Shine Your Star!”

After they announced the voting method, the first stage began immediately after the stage setting check.

The first stage was two teams that covered idol songs of QuZ Entertainment, which is famous for producing popular idols.

‘I think it’s kind of boring?’

It wasn’t bad, but overall, it just wasn’t as good as the original song.

Although she secretly took a few shots, she had no expectations. The important thing was the team with some of the participants mentioned on the internet.

After the second team match, which was boring, a team that was worth seeing came out.

It was a match with Cha Eugene, who had the most cuts on the stage of <It’s Me>.

“Heol, Cha Eugene!”

“They’re all good~.”

Since it was a team with many familiar participants, the cheers were also different from the early stages. There were already people holding placards.

Above all, he performed well on the stage.

‘Wow, I think they’re really good at this?’

People would believe it if they had already debuted because they have good skills and had good arrangements.

It was a stylish and cute digest of an old song with an overly sexy concept that was consumed like a top goal meme on the Internet.

In addition, not only Cha Eugene but also participants in charge of rap from the same agency stood out.

'Both of them will make it.'

She diligently left data centered on the two. While cleverly avoiding the eyes of the security guard who wandered in the middle.

It was interesting in a different sense because there were many familiar participants in the next team against this team.

'Maybe this will be the last one to be aired on TV?'

She found it both exciting and disappointing.

Now, from the next team on, it didn't seem like it would be fun at all.

Since more than half of the participants worth watching in the previous team match were present, it seemed like the next team would be boring.

And sure enough, the next stage wasn't very interesting.

Maybe it was made up of the participants who weren't chosen, but the absolute evaluation method was only used to judge one team, and she can see why they weren't chosen.

It was the worst stage ever.

"What the hell?"

"My legs hurt."

Now there were even people sneaking out from behind.

They were tired and their legs hurt, so they didn't want to see backstage.

In that distracting atmosphere, the MC exclaimed.

“The first team match is getting hotter and hotter. The turn now—these are the participants who covered the song of LeTi, the agency of VTIC, a global trending group that recently won the Daesang!”

The MC didn’t even mention *‘MallangDalkom.’*

That means they want the audience to take the bait.

But the effect was great.

“VTIC?”

The audience started to get excited.

VTIC was the hottest male idol at the moment.

People who were about to go out stopped for a while when they said that they covered a song by an idol who sold 1.2 million copies in the first week.

The MC shouted cheerfully in the atmosphere where some expectations were returned.

“Then the first team to go on stage, October 31!”

The name of the team that came to her mind was the name of the ice cream shop.

It wasn’t a name that caught her ear all at once.

Originally, it was common for the participants to have a poor sense of their own, so everyone leaked the team name without much inspiration.

‘That’s enough. What VTIC song did they cover?’

“The song that the participants covered—ah, they debuted as flower fairies, right? This is 〈Into the New World〉 by the girl group ‘MallangDalkom’ who was active as a national girl group!”

“…!?”

People were bewildered.

CHAPTER 15

Why did MallangDalkom suddenly come out here—?

It was only then that the bewildered audience realized that the stage wasn't covering VTIC's song but idols belonging to VTIC's agency, LeTi.

She was confused for a moment because the MC talked about VTIC openly before.

"What the hell—"

Because it wasn't a very popular song, there were some irritating reactions here and there.

Rather, it would be a different story if it's a hit song like 〈POP☆CON〉 because most people only remembered the chorus of the debut song.

It was the same for her who was changing the camera settings.

'Should I just get a picture of the public vote?'

When she thought this insincere thought and hid the camera from security, the stage went dark, and the intro began to flow out.

Woo~. Whoooo Ooh~. Woo~.

The melancholy melody of a modulated synthesizer filled the stage.

Originally, it was supposed to be a part where string instruments and piano would flow out to introduce a pure female idol-style orchestra in the 2010s.

"Huh?"

As she raised her head, she saw participants in white stage costumes and blackish decorations that looked like shoulder straps.

It was a suit-like style, so there was nothing new because it was a typical male idol's outfit, but she had a strange sense because of the lyrical atmosphere opposed to the intro, which is full of electronic sounds.

At that moment, the participants began to move.

– *At some point, I realized*

I am trapped in an imperfect time

The participant who began the first verse clearly had a handsome face and was good at movement.

'Was it Seon Ahyun?'

Even the choreography was mixed with lyrical and elegant dance moves, but somehow— It was a bit strange.

– *This unstoppable maze of time*

Save me from being trapped in it

The moment the next part came out, she realized.

'…Why is everyone so expressionless?'

Except for the person who sang the song, all the participants had no expression on their faces.

Originally, it was common for them to have less expression on their faces when it wasn't their part yet, but it was rare for them to have no expression at all.

Furthermore—.

'W, why are their eyes so strange?'

They were looking up at the air, not at the camera.

It was probably intentional, as their expression and eyes suddenly returned to focus only when their own part returned.

It would be a different story if they couldn't make eye contact with the camera because of their mistake, but idols knew that it was their job to look at the camera like a ghost even when it wasn't their part.

—So it was an even more strange sight.

It was even creepier in comparison to the participant who smiled alone in his part and had glowing eyes.

– It's withering away

Inside this small space

I'm waiting for the day it will bloom again

Come and find me

Bzzz. As he lowered the pitch, a dreary noise mixed in MR, and the desperate voice increased.

The lyrics are definitely soft and sad, but because of the intro and the directing, it sounded like a trap.

If you hear someone crying at a closed school, wouldn't you be more scared than wanting to help?

The stage was unfolding with such an eerie nuance.

– One step two step

The sound of you coming

It's ringing in my ears

Don't hesitate, give me your hand

I'm into a new world now~

Her spine was tingling when she heard a high-pitched voice singing the same lyrics as the song's title, "Into the New World."

Even though it was a pure and clear sound, it sounded strange and evil since it was made into dissonance by raising half the key.

Even though they were the participants, she became more immersed in the stage than their singing skills.

– Come to me

Come to me

It's dazzling, a paradise by your side

In the chorus, the same string instrument from the original song came in, and it was creepy how it clashed with the synthesizer's modulation sound.

Jiiing~ Kiiing~~

The movement borrowed from ballet and added a few more violent movements made it feel inhuman.

At that moment, she realized.

October 31, October 31—it was Halloween. The night when evil beings come out into this world.

– Come to me

Come to me

Melody of love for you (continues)

This is what a non-human singing to lure people in!

'Gasp!'

She covered her mouth as the sounds of explosions filled her head.

Of course, some idols used inhumane concepts.

But in the amateur idol debut audition program, no one would have thought they would try something so daring with a female senior song with the opposite concept—!

She instantly became immersed in the stage without even having the time to give evaluations such as *'They have great guts.'*

The song entered the bridge after passing through the second verse, which was modified and cut.

And once again, something unexpected happened.

– *Can't You feel me?*

The arrangement suddenly returned to the original song at Bridge!

Even the vocal range is back. The pure boy's voice echoed in the same high key as the original song, which was sung by a woman.

– *Your warm touch*

It wakes me up, it's beautiful

Spring garden

It felt sacred at first when the beautiful accompaniment music and lighting were changed to make it brighter.

– *Ooh, Ooh…*

But as the lights brightened, other things became clearer. It was the details of the outfits.

She thought the fabric of a shoulder strap-like was just dark, but it was actually stained with dark red dye on the same white cloth as the outfits.

There were even stains on the shoulder strap that seemed to flow from the neck.

'It was a vampire—!'

The bridge came to an end as soon as it had left an impression on the audience's minds, and immediately after that, the chorus of the modulated sound began.

– Come to me

Come to me

It's dazzling, a paradise by your side

However, this time, the dissonance with the orchestra has subsided and the noise has disappeared, revealing the sadness of the lyrics.

The artificial expressionless faces they put on when it wasn't their part disappeared, and the dreamy feeling became stronger than the feeling of eeriness.

The sound composition also has a sense of space like Dream Pop instead of sharpness.

– Come to me

Come to me

Melody of love for you (continues)

The modulation sound disappears, and the sound ends with the violin.

Unlike the original song, which ended with a ballet movement, the song ended with everyone collapsing as soon as the chorus ended.

In that way, the stage ended with more sorrow than fear at the end. As if the narrator of an inhuman song really fell in love with a person.

"…Whoa!!"

People who suddenly came to their senses cheered loudly at that moment.

It was a stage that stimulated the audience's hearts from start to finish, with a shocking beginning and a tragic end.

It wouldn't have been this or that if they had done it badly.

However, the team's participants did it right.

'This is so crazy!'

Many people in the shouting audience realized it was possible because these participants' skills were above average and their appearance and style were good.

The voices of the excited audience could be heard here and there as if they had already made up their minds.

The participants who got up patted each other on the back a few times and greeted the audience with a smile.

"Thank you!"

"T, thank you!"

It felt cuter because of the other teams' actions and the gap between them and the stage was too wide.

"Cute—"

She, who had been directing the camera, also muttered heartwarmingly. In particular, a member with a high-pitched bridge caught her eye.

Even after she went home, she couldn't stop thinking about that unexpected bridge.

With this pronunciation, he hit the high notes ridiculously well, and his face was cool and cute, and he didn't even flinch as he did the excessive concept.

'When the voting came out, I will remember his names.'

She kept looking at Park Moondae, who was leaving the stage and made a promise to herself before realizing she was holding a camera.

And she was surprised.

'I was so focused on the stage that I totally forgot about the camera—!'

It's too bad that she can't take a picture, but she's so happy to be able to see it with her own eyes and not have to worry about the camera!

This was the first time since the former idol.

A shudder passed.

Well, it was a sign of being too immersed.

* * *

When the team members left the stage, they either grabbed the wall or slumped down as if their legs were losing strength.

I leaned against the wall and thought.

'It was… more fun than I thought.'

It was strange.

To be honest, I never expected this to be fun.

I had no choice but to do it because I would die suddenly if I didn't debut.

I've never danced or sang in front of anyone in my life. Even with makeup on.

—Obviously, up until the time I sang and danced 〈POP☆CON〉, I just felt like I had to do it.

'I thought I'd come back to reality… Why is it fun?'

I'm even in a condition where my breath is about to pop out of my throat.

'It's harder than practice.'

I think I put more energy into it because it was a real match.

And probably, the guys who climbed on top together with me were all out of breath in the same way.

Because I'm also out of breath.

But their expressions were bright.

It was because the shouts were loud enough to tear their ears.

"Whoaa!!!"

"Encore! Encore!"

I could even hear some shouting for an encore from behind now.

'There weren't many people.'

And the results— were better than expected.

It was a cheer that even the first and second-place teams didn't receive.

No way. Is this why it's fun? Because of the reactions that are pouring out in front of me?

"Everyone— thank you for your hard work! We did a great job! Really!"

As the camera approached, Big Sejin quickly opened his mouth.

I can't say he wasn't conscious of the camera, but it seems like his words are sincere anyway.

Originally, everyone praised everything if the results were good, and the team members started thanking each other and hugging each other.

“Thank you for your hard work!”

“T, thank you…”

Should I say something too?

“Thanks to you— it was fun. Thank you.”

“Moondae-ya…”

“Oh my, even Moondae says things like this.”

What are they doing?

I’m impressed by how much these guys were moved by every word.

Even the sullen Lee Sejin was filled with a tearful look on his face.

“…Everyone has worked hard.”

“Heol. Hyung-nim.”

“I’m touched.”

The team members who rarely look at Lee Sejin now look at him with warm eyes as if they are not aware that the camera is there.

The atmosphere was very similar to the ending of a boy’s manhwa.

I remembered the last practice session.

– Hyung! As expected, we should also strengthen our fear! But, don’t you think we need to go strong? So that we don’t fall behind with innocence!

– Right? Hyung, thinking about it, what about the killer!

– Oh~ that’s strong!

–… It could overlap with the existence of a real person, so why not think of it as a fantasy creature?

– G, ghost…?

–… Ghost?

– Ung, u, uh, like this, if you move… Because it looks amazing, so…

– Hahaha! There are a lot of good opinions~ Let's vote by a majority of the people!

—.

…I only remembered the process of struggling to euphemize the absurd excessive claims that these talkative people were making.

At this time, I was grateful for Big Sejin. He's good at leading public opinion.

In the end, most of the arrangement was carried out according to the wishes of Big Sejin and me. This was because this punk also pushed the vampire option I chose.

Nonetheless, it has been proven that vampire popularity was better than the ghost or the killer.

So what if it's a ghost or a killer? Are they going to get cursed for sharing 10,000 units on SNS?

Anyway, I was satisfied with the good results by properly arranging fear and innocence.

And honestly—.

It's fun.

I thought I could understand why so many people wanted to do this job.

My teammates gathered around me as I took a deep breath and stood up.

I shrugged. Without it, the atmosphere wouldn't be alive.

It's also important to show the camera how good our team works, so I didn't try to get out of it.

"Let's make sure to be a team in the next team match."

"Ah, let's do it together again next time!"

"I, I like it."

"Honestly, our teamwork was the best."

The congratulations kept coming, and when there was no longer a repertoire, they moved to the area to check out the opponent's stage with the guidance of the staff.

As soon as we arrived at the room where the monitor was installed, the opposing team's <Tiger> stage began.

"Oh—"

These guys were politely admiring, but they probably realized it.

That there is a big difference in how audiences cheer.

CHAPTER 16

The other team wasn't bad either. First of all, Ryu Chungwoo was a good match for the song, and objectively speaking, their stage was better than average compared to the stages of the other teams.

However, in the audience's head, the target of comparison with that team will not be another team.

But it was VTIC.

This is the problem with covering the latest hit song by the most popular same gender idols. The fact that the original stage is imprinted on many brains as it is currently in progress.

Even if there is someone better than VTIC, it will not be easily recognized. It was because VTIC fans were all over the Internet.

It is somewhat buried in opinions such as 'It can't be compared to VTIC'.

Of course, aside from all of this— our side did better.

Whether or not the team members knew this, their faces were bright when they went back to the stage to greet them before the vote.

The MC introduced the teams in the order of their performance.

"Ah, our *'Oktober 31'* team! It was a thrilling and fun performance like Halloween! That's what the team name means, right?"

"Yes! It means Halloween's cuties! And there is another meaning."

"What is it?"

"Like 31 flavors of ice cream, it means that each of our team members has a variety of charm!"

Big Sejin looked back at the team members with a flower cup pose. Other team members quickly made poses for the introduction.

I— moderately put my finger on the cheek.

In reality, there is no such thing as a person my age doing this except when they're drunk and try to make fun of someone disgustingly, but is there a place for a face in a survival show?

"Whaaaa!"

"Cute!!!"

Fortunately, there was no solemn response. Nevertheless, I'm glad that I was able to raise Park Moondae's appearance stats.

Because B- was barely a 'warmth' and a 'beautiful' level of appearance.

And the opposing team's introduction continued.

"Hello! I'm—"

It wasn't to the point of being embarrassing, but I could tell that the other team was nervous because the cheers were different.

"Nice to meet you. I'm Ryu Chungwoo!"

"Kyaaaa!"

The only thing to believe is that there was a loud shout for Ryu Chungwoo, but it will not be enough for the team to win.

The only thing to believe is that the cheers toward Ryu Chungwoo were loud, but unfortunately, that wouldn't be enough for the team to win.

"Shareholders, please express what's on your mind! First of all, please vote for the team you think did better! *'October 31'* is number one! *'Mountain Hero'* team is number two!"

He showed the team's number with his fingers.

As soon as the audience pressed the button on the remote control, the voting ended, and they announced a new voting method.

"All right, now you just have to pick one participant from each team who you liked the most!"

The MC emphasized this once more.

"I'm telling you once again, but it's not putting 2 groups together!! Pick one person per team and two people in total!"

This was a bone of contention in one's face.

Perhaps the production team wanted to show a very provocative development, so the reward for voting as an individual was better than the reward for voting as a team.

They even blew it up without notice right before the stage rehearsal.

– Everyone! The reward for the *'individual match'* in this team match is— you're exempt from being eliminated!

–… Yes!?

So, there were many complaints from other teams.

Fortunately, the team didn't have this kind of conflict. Seon Ahyun was a pushover, and Gold 1 and 2 were not the ones who had the courage to speak up even if they had complaints.

Lee Sejin would have been too busy to digest his part right away, and Choi Wongil had already broken their spirits once, so he didn't say anything unnecessary.

Big Sejin wouldn't have anything to complain about because he eventually got the position as the main dancer.

From what I can see, it doesn't seem to be because of teamwork, but because each person has too many problems to solve on their own, so they don't have the energy to cause conflict.

That's right. But it doesn't matter because it looks like it happened because of teamwork on the camera.

Anyway, the individual voting ended in a more ambiguous atmosphere than the first vote.

"Thank you!"

After a short greeting, the participants went down from the stage. Of course, that includes me.

Strangely, I felt disappointed to come down.

* * *

It was in the middle of the night when filming ended.

"Everyone, you've worked hard~."

"I think we did a good job!"

When they heard that the results of the individual match would be announced at the ranking ceremony, everyone was disappointed, but they quickly got over it.

Because it happened the same way last season, they must have half expected it, and they must have felt relaxed about it because they thought they had won the team match anyway.

Yeah, we won the team match.

– For the team match— October 31 wins! The score is 82 to 401!

– Whoa!!!

That too, with a crazy score of '82 to 401'.

When they heard the announcement, they were stunned for 5 seconds, then cheered.

There was nothing else to say because, except for Big Sejin, the rest of them were on the verge of crying.

But these guys soon had no choice but to calm down.

– Uh…

– Donggyun-ah.

– You've worked hard. Well done.

There was someone on the other team who really cried.

Originally, it was hard for someone who wasn't as sad as the first person to cry. Even more, if it is tears of joy.

As a result, the team members who were aware of the camera and the opposing team remained in an ambiguous state of joy and became extremely happy after the filming was over.

"Shall we create a group chat room? I mean, we live and work hard together so far~ shouldn't we have a group chat?"

"Heol, that's great!"

"I'm totally agree, leader."

A group chat room was created under the leadership of Big Sejin.

Surprisingly, the atmosphere was good, and Lee Sejin even gave his phone number without saying anything.

"Huh!"

"Hey! Hyung-nim!"

“Wow~ All of our team members can talk affectionately like this!”

“…”

In the end, I naturally exchanged numbers and entered the group messenger room.

—I’ll probably turn off the notification later.

“Moondae~ You did a great job.”

“Yeah, you worked hard as a leader too.”

Big Sejin talked to me as I was packing my luggage. I ended the situation reasonably and politely, so it was easy for him to take it.

“Haha, I was a good leader!”

“…”

This guy must be doesn’t know about humbleness—.

“It was a joke, a joke!”

Big Sejin smiled brightly.

It didn’t look like that, so stop doing that.

“Let’s see each other often. Keep in touch!”

“Hmm, yeah.”

Big Sejin seemed to be thinking of putting me in his line.

‘It looks like he’s planning to cut off the participants who are from the same agency because they aren’t good at all.’

But I didn’t forget that this guy is a drug addict. I had no intention of taking any risks until the accusations were all cleared up.

'I'll skip it and tell him later that the phone is broken.'

As I was thinking about it, another voice came from the other side.

"M, me too! K, keep in tou—"

"Keep in touch?"

Seon Ahyun nodded vigorously. He should be better than Big Sejin, right?

I nodded, and Seon Ahyun's face brightened. Big Sejin smiled and said.

"Should the three of us create the group separately? It would be nice to have a group chat with people of the same age."

Did he have to bring it up like this?

However, thanks to Seon Ahyun's quick approval, they instantly opened another group messenger room.

An ominous feeling passes by.

I put this worry aside because I wanted to finish the stage as soon as possible, but it bothers me that a lot of votes came in after the first team fight was tied last season.

No way will I be stuck with these guys like this?

"…"

I don't know. Anyway, I think I did well in the team match, so I'll probably make it through the first round.

"Everyone, go home safely~."

"See you again!"

The participants left the filming set after greeting. I also walked out and took the bus.

I'll have to look for the team match reviews when I go back to my temporary studio.

* * *

The audience would usually sign a formal agreement not to reveal anything about the stage until the show aired.

However, the spoiler ban was rarely properly followed anywhere.

So, reviews began to appear one after the other on anonymous sites that didn't reveal the writers' identities.

It was roughly like this.

[Review of RII audience]

: MallangDalkom is awesome. I'm amazed.

– Who the hell are these guys to keep showing up?

ㄴIs it Aggro? (t/n : 어그로 is slang meaning a behavior in which they are being disrespectful in order to bring attention to themselves.)

ㄴㄴㄴ I think they're really good?

ㄴNo, I mean, how do they manage to make MallangDalkom so awesome? Did you even poppin in 〈POP☆CON〉 ?

It was unexpected.

Even so, I thought that the team with Cha Eugene, who was ranked number one, would have more mentions, but it seems that this team has more mentions.

Of course, about half of them didn't seem to be real audiences but rather people who wanted to jump on the bandwagon and make a mockery of 〈Idol Inc.〉 .

But doesn't that still mean that we made an impression on a lot of people?

I picked out some good reviews and read them.

[First team match, I will write what I remember]

…And the boys who perform with MallangDalkom's debut song are really good, and they seem to be able to debut as they are. They have a good physical combination, and the only thing that bothers me is Lee SeJin1, but he almost put it away with the atmosphere… I wonder who came up with the idea.

Oh that's right, the high-pitched sound was so good I think we could get the main vocal here

+I will put a picture as proof because I don't make things up. (Blurred stage installation photo)

ㄴSo who else was there besides Lee Sejin?

ㄴYou said they're really good but you can't remember their name ㅋㅋㅋ Yeah, it's fake, next.

ㄴYeah, it's not fake, just look at the proof shot ㅋㅋ

– I looked at the profile now, and when I matched the name, there was Seon Ahyun. He was so fucking good. If there's a center, he'd be a 100% center

ㄴBut I'm really curious how they did well ㅠㅠ MallangDalkom's debut song is so cringy.

ㄴThey did it with an occult story, and I got goosebumps.

ㄴ??

ㄴNo, it's a robot concept

ㄴㅋ Ignore the Aggro, just push the fairy concept.

ㄴㄴㄴNo, it was a werewolf concept

ㄴNo, it's a vampire.

ㄴWhich one is right, you crazy bastards ㅠㅠ

ㄴThe fairy is right ㅎ

“The post is ruined.”

When I looked at other posts, I saw the same people’s jokes in the middle, which turned into a game.

Until the broadcast aired, there were probably only rumors, but that was a good thing. Wouldn’t it be more interesting if they didn’t know the details?

And since the production team will definitely look at the public opinion on the Internet, there is a high probability that this overflowing amount of mention will be a good thing for the team.

‘It was enough to just look at the reaction—’

Now let’s look at the priorities to deal with next.

I called back the pop-up that came to mind as soon as the stage was over.

[Successful stage!]

You impressed the majority!

– Number of audiences: 582 (Updated!)

– Impressed rate: 81% (updated!)

: Draw Rare Characteristics ☜ Click!

The explanation is longer than before. Perhaps the number of audiences and the impressed ratio gave better characteristics every time I set a record.

So far, both of the characteristics that have been used have worked, so getting to choose a characteristic at one stage was a good reward.

Well, If I don’t make my debut within a year, I will die, so this is a good balance.

'…Hmm, thinking like this suddenly makes me mad.'

Aside from that, I had leveled up after accomplishing 500 dance practices while preparing for the first team match.

However, I delayed stat distribution. This is because I wanted to invest effectively based on what the next shoot would be about.

'So let's keep this one and just draw the characteristics.'

As expected, when I clicked "draw," a slot machine appeared. I think I'm getting used to this appearance.

The slot machine spins as usual, stopping when it gets to the letters in brass color.

"Ah…"

It was a shame that I got the brass box and didn't get the silver box, which was the high grade, and there were only a few of them in that space.

'I can't always be lucky.'

Moreover, the content was more important than the grade.

I quickly cleared my mind and looked at the effect of the chosen characteristics.

[Characteristics: 'Look at me! (D)' Acquired!]

People pay a little more attention to your actions.

"…"

I was at a loss for words.

CHAPTER 17

t/n : (Hello everyone, I will change Big Sejin to Keun Sejin for the nickname since it sounds better for a nickname, but I will still use Big Sejin depending on the situation. Thank you!)

Of course, it would be an important talent to be noticed in the entertainment industry because there were many cases where a brief moment on stage changed one's career.

However, from the title to the content, I couldn't get rid of the impression that this characteristic was only for the attention-seeker.

Even the exact growth rate is not mentioned; it just says *'a little more.'*

"Can they use this vague expression in the status window?"

Is that why it's a D-class characteristic?

But there was no miracle such a status window responded to my complaints.

I finally accepted the reality.

Yeah. The characteristics that received attention—okay. If it helped me get debuted, that would be great.

Drrrt!

As soon as I closed the status window, the smartphone vibrated. I checked right away to see if it was someone from the production team.

But it wasn't.

"What the hell?"

It was Messenger Talk.

[Lee Sejin(Keun): Moondae Moondae, don't you check the group chat? ㅋㅋㅋㅋ]

[Lee Sejin(Keun): You didn't even read and ignore it, you're so cold Moondae-ya.]

"…"

I should have also turned off my personal messenger, but I didn't think of it. Unfortunately, I couldn't ignore the messages I'd already read when we were still going to meet in the future, so I had no choice but to send a reply.

[Me: I don't usually look at my phone. Sorry]

[Lee Sejin(Keun): Ey, why are you apologizing for? It's embarrassing ㅎㅎ]

[Lee Sejin(Keun): Please check the group chat soon!]

Is there any special news?

I checked the group messenger room. In the group chat with the teammates from the last team match, there were over 500 new messages.

Of course, I had no intention of reading them all. So I scrolled down and checked only the last conversation.

The team members were captured and shared comments from the last stage.

It seemed like their social life was passing by since they were using the expression *'They said everyone on this team is handsome~'* and saying that Older and Younger Brother are handsome.

[Lee Sejin(Keun): That's right, now that I think about it, every time I look at Moondae's face on TV, his face gets more handsome. ㅎ]

[Lee Sejin (Keun): For the sake of our friendship, please share the dermatologist with us.]

This is because of level up, you punk.

Of course, I couldn't say that, so I just told him I didn't go to any.

This guy who used a word like *'confirmation demand'* just to ask about the dermatologist—.

Is it just my feeling? But I feel very tired.

At that moment, the vibration rang out again.

[Seon Ahyun: Moondae-ya, how are you? Thank you for always treating me well even in the first team match. I will definitely repay you next time— (See more)]

He posted a long message in the group chat.

Then at the same time, no one posts a message suddenly.

It was unbearably quiet.

"…"

After a short reply for human reasons, I put the data right away.

When we meet at the next shoot— I have to say that I can't see Messenger Talk because I don't have wifi at home.

There were still five days left until the next filming, the production presentation.

* * *

Production presentation. A promotional event was held before the first episode aired.

In fact, the 77 participants had little to do as individuals. All we have to do is sing 〈It's Me〉 and take a few pictures of ourselves.

Of course, it was important that *'the photo gets taken'* here.

This is because it has already been proven photos taken at the production presentation may play a big role in predicting the early stage voter turnout.

'Thanks to it, I got paid for taking some pictures.'

First of all, it's not just taking a picture but also a request to edit it, so the pay is pretty good.

Anyway, if I had to express my feelings standing at such a production presentation—it was like that.

'They're all faces I've seen before.'

The faces holding out their cameras from behind the reporters were familiar.

Let's analyze it a bit— let's see, first of all, I saw guys selling data one by one on the opposite side.

Except for that, most of them were fans of existing idols. Their purpose of searching for a new idol is half; half of it is just to have fun.

For that reason, it seemed like there weren't many people who took pictures with just one person in them.

After taking three or four participants in one shot, I saw that the lens was moving slightly, as if they were cropping each one of them.

Anyway, there were more people than I thought.

Slowly, it seems that the atmosphere that this program will succeed by making the controversy a hot topic is being created subtly.

'Unfortunately, I can't get out of B even if I spend my remaining points on Park Moondae's appearance.'

Maybe the appearance stat will take the benefits of the production presentation, like an A- or higher, so I have to work hard for the 〈It's Me〉 performance.

'As expected, is the face the trend—?'

Another brief regret that I should have tried to increase my appearance stats comes again.

"We'll start after the reporters enter!"

The staff shouted for us to wait as we lined up on the outdoor lawn, just as we had rehearsed at dawn.

Someone spoke to me as I was relaxing my feet between the interludes.

“I saw your performance.”

“What?”

It was Cha Eugene who was standing in front of the diagonal line. If I remember it correctly, he is the participant who will take first place this season.

‘But why are you talking out of context?’

I remembered that moment. It was like this last time.

Perhaps it was during the filming of the 〈It’s Me〉 broadcast stage, Cha Eugene asked whether I couldn’t dance, and I replied that he should judge by looking at my performance.

Don’t tell me, is this staged story an extension of that conversation?

Due to the timing, it’s likely to be the first team match if we talk about the stage between the participants now.

If that’s the case, I’ll just have to admit it. I did a good job thinking about it. But it was still out of the blue.

It’s not even a boy’s manhwa—. Did he feel a sense of rivalry?

And even more unexpectedly, Cha Eugene raised his thumb.

“You did a great job!”

“Ah, thank you.”

“Let’s team up next time.”

“It would be nice if possible.”

No matter what this guy thinks, it's really good to be together.

I said okay without asking or arguing because I don't have to worry about it even if it's only an empty word.

The conversation with Cha Eugene ended there.

"D, do you—want to eat this?"

"Yeah, thank you."

"Huh! Ahyun-nim, don't you have anything for me?"

"Wow, it seems that Keun Sejin can't even feed himself now that he's no longer the leader."

"H, here."

I took jelly from Seon Ahyun, who was close to me, chewed it, and then finished warming up my feet.

The staff gave a signal when I was listening to the former Gold team members chatting.

"Get ready~~"

The tiring prelude came out just like it did during the first week of filming.

Anyway, this stage will be uploaded on WeTube, so let's not make any mistakes with the choreography.

* * *

I heard someone shouting at me as soon as I finished the stage of 〈It's Me〉 and left.

"Moondae-ya!"

Were they calling Park Moondae?

I turned around to see who it was, and it was one of the people with cameras.

When I turned around, the woman in the hoodie constantly pressed the camera's shutter button.

—Is she only taking a picture of me? The woman shouted again as I unconsciously pointed my hand to my face.

"Moondae-ya! Heart please!"

"…"

I never thought the day would come when I heard those words.

But the opportunity was an opportunity, so I made a heart with my fingers and lifted it.

It's a little… embarrassing.

"Poke your cheek! Poke your cheek too!"

From the side, Seon Ahyun is trying to sneak out to the other side.

He seems to have already been bothered by a camera calling him before the stage.

I glanced at him.

'You do it too.'

Even if just one person joined me, it would be less embarrassing.

Whether he got the signal properly or not, Seon Ahyun creaked and came back. Then Keun Sejin came between them.

"What are you two doing? Ah, a picture~"

He put up his spoon really well.

I don't like it when people put their arms on other people's shoulders, but since there was a camera, I decided to let it go.

And then, all of a sudden, the three of us put our arms around each other's shoulders and took a picture.

'In the end, the three of us are taking pictures even before the first episode.'

It's been a while since we opened up the group messenger room.

It was a bit uncomfortable, but the water had already spilled from the first team match, so I decided not to avoid it.

Anyway, I could see the face of a woman who hardly took her eyes off the camera, as if she had gotten a good shot.

Oh—.

She was the one that bought some data from me.

When the schedule made it hard to shoot an event directly, many homepage masters bought it, edited it, and uploaded it as if it was taken by themselves.

Yeah, that person was also in demand.

Let's see, I remember that she was being sarcastic when she said that as a data seller, I have no conscience when I raise the price.

…Still, I've never taken a picture of them in their private life, like when they're leaving an airport.

And if the data didn't sell, it was shared for free on the fan community or on WeTube.

'Well… Anyway I have nothing to say even if I get cursed at.'

Even if the company is leaving it alone for business reasons, they are indeed ignoring other people's right to do business there.

Anyway, I don't know if that crime is why I didn't make my debut and will be killed suddenly.

Maybe to understand how an idol feels when they are being photographed.

"Park Moondae is really cute!!"

"…"

Wow… I really can't get used to it.

Come to think of it, the male idol I was filming was involved in a drunk driving accident at the end of last year.

'That guy, his position is the main vocalist—'

Maybe because of Park Moondae… I guess that will change.

I felt a strange feeling and waved my hand.

Anyway, the data for the production presentation is precious, so I hope they take it well.

'It would be better if they upload the photos before Friday.'

Just this Friday, *'Relisting! Idol Inc.'* started airing for the first broadcast.

* * *

Tnet Headquarters. The editing room located in the corner of the 9th floor was full of office workers who stayed up all night.

Ryu Seorin, who cast Park Moondae, was one of them.

"Seorin-ah, your eyes are red. Have some coffee."

"I don't have time. Just give me coffee, please."

It was her 7th cup today.

All of the faces that were looking at the video data and drinking coffee like it was water were tired.

Ryu Seorin's former senior sighed.

"Editing the first episode is important."

"…Yes. You can see the direction of the program."

What to show and what to cut.

"Yeah, everything needs a story to be fun."

"It's fun when people can immerse themselves in it even if they don't think about it."

It's fun to have a narrative in an audition program. And the viewer is interested only when the narrative is easy to see.

This was almost considered a widely-accepted theory.

"Right, so—I'll think up to the 4th episode and build up to it from the 1st episode."

"That's right. The result of the first team match is the end of the episode—we have to catch the flow of the story and capture the characters of the kids."

Of course. Neither Writer Ryu Seorin nor her former senior had a strong authority to decide that.

'In the end, it's important what the main PD thinks.'

She took her hand off the video for a moment.

"Are you going to rest?"

"…I'd like to make a suggestion."

"Oh, editing?"

“Yes.”

“Well~ That’s fine. Even in season 1… Was it Lee Goyoon? PD Jung accepted what you said about editing the story of that ordinary participant.”

Should I try? Ryu Seorin snorted inwardly at her former senior’ words.

‘I did it because I was aiming for good timing.’

This was just the time.

Because of their comradeship, people who were exhausted sometimes forgot their sense of authority.

“This time it’s… well, there’s no one to push for, and it’s a good suggestion.”

“Yes, we just need to think about the ratings.”

Since the last season ended early because of a scandal, there were not many requests from big agencies.

If so, what kind of participants should be shown so that viewers will feel catharsis when the team match is aired?

There were hidden meanings in the playful words. Ryu Seorin shrugged.

“Ey, where do the production crew make all those things? Originally people will be like that. They want to keep liking the kids they like, and they want to keep hating the kids they hate.”

“Hmm.”

Her former senior kept silent when she tied it up with the production crew.

“We’re just making it easier for viewers to immerse themselves in it, well.”

“That’s true.”

Her former senior gently lowered the words. This is because Ryu Seorin definitely had a sense.

So, she changed the subject and did it again as if she knew everything.

“So this time you chose the underdog? That’s because the editor has a lot to touch on.”

“…”

Underdog effect.

Just like David beat Goliath, when the weak beat the strong, it was a thrilling turn of events that made the weak go crazy.

And it was one of the most fun narratives an audition program could show.

Of course, the editor had to do a lot of work to make the right effect happen. Because it has to be well put together.

“Are you going to suggest that kid? You kept looking back.”

“Well… I see it.”

Ryu Seorin split roughly, but in reality, she was positive.

‘No matter what I think… I have to give it to that kid.’

Recalling from the video that she was turning around Ryu Seorin, she has already decided.

“Fighting~”

She responded appropriately to her former senior’ unintentional words and visited the main PD to talk to him.

“Excuse me, PD.”

And she was half sure that the main PD was thinking the same thing as her

CHAPTER 18

“Wow, I’m so nervous!”

“It would be nice if we came out a lot.”

The auditorium of the dorm was filled with the voices of the sweaty teenagers.

‘They’re in a good spirit.’

I came to the set at night, wore uncomfortable uniforms, and sat in an uncomfortable iron chair while they were filming.

There are cameras everywhere, so it’s hard for me to show how uncomfortable I am. Was it only me?

Gold 1, 2, and Keun Sejin must have grown tired of talking among themselves, so they came all the way here and put up with it.

“Moondae Hyung-nim, how do you feel about the first episode?”

“Ah~ Are you ready to become a legend in ranking evaluation?”

“It’s amazing! Moondae-ssi!”

“Stop it—”

My life is a legend when I can’t ignore this nonsense, really—.

I want to drink something cold.

‘…Oh, there’s a drink.’

Now that I see, there was an ionized drink under each seat. Seeing that the brand is clearly visible, it seems that the PPL was finally opened.

It wasn't made by a famous brand, but anyway it was still good. I took a drink and drank it.

And I almost spit it out.

"…"

I can understand why they put the PPL in.

Because it tastes terribly bad.

"Countdown will begin soon! Please shout along from 10!"

A number appeared on the screen of the beam projector in front of me as the logo disappeared at the same time as the sound of the staff shouting.

"10! 9! 8!—"

When the countdown ended and the melody of the theme song 〈It's Me〉 played, cheers and applause erupted from all over the place.

And that's how the long-awaited first episode aired.

* * *

The first episode was aired for two hours as a special program.

This means that the participants sat on iron chairs for 120 minutes and didn't move except for the broadcast reaction.

However, I don't think the participants were concerned about that.

The important thing is one.

'How long have I been on the show?'

Of course, there must have been many more disappointed participants.

How was I?

Yeah, once the filming is done, let's review the contents with the reactions I found on the Internet.

First, the screen showed all kinds of responses from the Internet, like articles criticizing 〈Idol Inc.〉 and the best comments.

And the caption came up.

[A lot of controversies!]

[How did the actual filming of 〈Relisting! Idol Inc.〉 go?]

The viewers reacted the same way as before.

They seem to be continuing to watch the show while cursing.

– I mean, to think you don't skip that kind of thing and just show it? As expected, the cable class isn't going anywhere. ㅋㅋ

– I feel like I'm eating Mala-flavored popcorn

– It's not fun. Show me the kids.

Fortunately, the opening passed quickly, and the first participant appeared.

[Ah~ I'm so nervous!]

'Oh, Choi Wongil.'

That's right. The group evaluation to which Choi Wongil belongs appeared first. Choi Wongil received quite a lot of screen time as a typical youngest position.

'I'm sure the first contestant was someone else.'

After that, the first participant didn't get any more screen time.

'He won't be coming out anymore in the future.'

Overall, it was like that.

It was chosen on its own by the people on the production crew. Some participants didn't even get the reaction cut properly.

Interestingly, the participants from my previous group received quite a bit of screen time.

Starting with Choi Wongil, the evaluations of Keun Sejin and Gold 1 and 2 were aired before the first part ended.

The feeling was fine. When entering a team match, starting with a good team is good.

'Of course, the most important thing is that my screen time is long.'

If my evaluation had not been fully edited, it should have been in the first episode in time order.

And fortunately, it came out.

[Next participant, enter now!]

My first screen appearance was at the end of part 1.

It was a strange feeling to see Park Moondae walking up to the stage on the screen. It feels like watching someone imitate what I did.

Keun Sejin and Golds started hitting me in the back, grabbing my shoulders, and shaking them from behind.

They don't give me any room to think.

"Hey, hey, hey, you're coming out! Can you see it?"

"…Yeah, it's me."

If they shake it more, I won't be able to see even if I have eyes, so stop it.

Since I can't say that, I returned the response appropriately and focused on the screen again.

The conversation between the judges was revealed.

[Yes, participants. Please introduce yourself.]

[…My name is Park Moondae. Please take good care of me.]

After Park Moondae's greeting on stage was over, the interview was inserted immediately. It was a good sign because it showed that it went through editing.

[Q: Is there anything you want to say?]

[Park Moondae: No. (silence)]

[Park Moondae: There's nothing in particular.]

BGM without laughter and chilling sound effects were a bonus.

"…Uhm."

Let's see—it must have answered the question of whether I had any problems with other team members.

How do they bring that up?

The edit made the word 'positive sign' disappear in 7 seconds.

'How cheap.'

The judges' absurd reactions flowed more exaggeratedly from the screen.

[No, is that all?]

[Yes. I have no experience to introduce.]

As soon as the answer was finished, another interview cut appeared.

[Park Moondae: (Before this show) I have no experience in the entertainment industry.]

[Q: Have you received any training?]

[Park Moondae: I don't have one.]

They thought I wanted to be X here.

I said it on purpose because I thought they might edit it, but I didn't know it would be a short answer.

At this time, the Internet reaction was also brutal.

– His answer is so insincere.

– Is that the concept?

– He doesn't seem to be motivated, so why is an ordinary person like him crawling out here?;;

It will make me so mad if he really can't do anything.

And all the judges' absurd whispers on the screen were shown with subtitles.

[Ah, looking at the application form here, there is really nothing.]

[Right.]

The stiff looks of the participants who had previously been judged and the cuts when they whispered to each other came out in an instant. I wonder where that cut came from.

The screen effect was added to make it seem like the judge was about to say something sarcastic.

[Then let's take a look at your performance]

[Yes.]

On the screen, Park Moondae grabbed the microphone, and the accompaniment flowed out.

[Ding ding! It's the sound of an ice purifier~]

The came out.

It was an ad in the middle of the show, which is something that only cable shows can do.

"Heol!"

"Hyung, don't worry too much."

Exaggerated reactions and worries poured out around me.

"Are you okay?"

'The guy who hasn't come out yet is worried about me…?'

I think it's because of the camera that they get into the atmosphere.

I answered bluntly.

"Well, as long as it's aired."

Of course, it was bullshit. No matter what I actually do, it will be done with the editing.

However—.

I laughed inwardly.

'I don't think it will kill me at all.'

Since the came in the middle of the evaluation, it was fine to break the flow once.

The short ended quickly, and the prelude flowed again.

By this time, public opinion on the Internet was hitting the ground. (t/n: 땅을 치다 means regretting and being upset. People often say "땅 치고 후회하다" He bitterly regretted having missed the opportunity.)

– I’m not really curious about it, but there’s even an. ㅋ

– Ah, give the dose to the kids who can do it, not the ones who can’t.

– I don’t want to accept the concept of ordinary people.

– I don’t want to see you anymore because you think you’re really good at survival

The comments stopped for a moment when Park Moondae grabbed the microphone and started singing.

[I remember the ‘me’ I used to know…]

[…!!]

The images of the judges with their eyes wide open and the participants suddenly raising their heads kept coming in without a break.

– ?

– What?

– Huh?

– Why is he good?

– What the hell, he’s good ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

To be honest, I was just as embarrassed as the internet reaction.

‘…I’m good.’

With the editing added, it came out as if some kind of hermit genius appeared in the audition.

Even the vague hand movements that can’t even be called choreography were cut off so well, it looked plausible.

It was a much more favorable edit than I thought.

'I guessed that they were trying to make it interesting by killing expectations in front and showing the stage well.'

[As if every day is a PARTY, ooh~]

There was even a cut in the second half of the high notes where the judge Mudie covered her mouth.

'I don't think that's from my evaluation?'

Are you going to cut it off in an interview and turn it around like this?

When I felt bitter, people's opinions on the Internet quickly changed.

– Wow, he's really good.

– The feeling of wanting to escape from this ordinary people.

– Oh, the high notes are amazing

– His voice is good ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ I'm embarassed.

– It's been a while since I saw someone sing 'PARTY in ME' well ㅠㅠㅠ is he Park Moondae? I will buy the stock.

The production crew even saved a brief silence after the song ended.

[Thank you for listening]

[…]

The close-ups of the other participant's reactions and the silence made for an unnecessary dramatic scene.

The judges' reactions were also shown quickly, and the choreographer's words were given large captions as if they were just famous sayings.

[You know you did a good job, right?]

[…I practiced hard to sing well.]

[No, you're just born with this. You're talented.]

If there is a problem, it is that my reaction to the words became relatively boring after editing it like that.

And it was probably on purpose.

[Then you've never had a special lesson?]

[Yes.]

[Not at all? So, academy too?]

[Yes.]

Because it was like this when looking at the internet reaction.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ Yeah, I don't think he practiced hard.

– Moondae-ya, your answer is soulless.

– There was a time when his soul was singing, where did it go?

The only good thing was that I didn't think 'Park Moondae's response was harsh or that the comments were full of jokes.

Hmm. The strands were barely caught.

'Tactless— did I get into the character of A My-Pace-Ordinary talented person?'
(T/n : 마이페이스 means personality that goes out in his or her own way without being swayed by what others say or do.)

There's a bit of cursing, but it wasn't a bad start.

No, it was rather good.

I thought I would easily pass the second round with this early recognition, as long as the team match editing didn't get too crazy after that.

'If this is the flow, I might be able to wrap the dance appropriately and hand it over.'

With a feeling of hope, the content started to show up on the screen. Finally, it was the content when judge Youngrin asked me to dance.

The reaction on the Internet in this area was ambiguous.

– It looks like he can't dance.

– Wow they're making him dance.

– I think it's going to be solemn ㅠㅠ

– I'm already embarrassed

[Yes. So, is this song possible?]

[Huh…?]

But as soon as Park Moondae showed up and asked for a song right away, and the staff was shocked by what he said, the comments started to get excited again.

– What is it?

– What? What did you request?

– Why are the hands of the staff shaking? ㅋㅋㅋ

– I can't even imagine what it is.

And when the incredibly lively 〈POP☆CON〉 came out, all the editing and comments went crazy.

[!!!!]

When Park Moondae danced 〈POP☆CON〉 with a serious expression and was cross-edited with subtitles full of exclamation points and the judges spouting water, the atmosphere went to another world.

"…"

"Pfft."

The voices of the participants, who were laughing all over the place, could be heard.

Sincerely… I was embarrassed.

'No… I was just trying to make it look like I was working hard even for an easy song.'

It came out like a crazy person who was serious about popcorn.

I was worried that it could become an internet meme like this, but as expected, I had to look at the score to find out.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– What is this, Moondae so cute, though? ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– Then he's so serious about the stage.

– You're really working hardㅋㅋㅋㅋ

'The reaction is… good?'

The reaction was better than when I sang. Oh My God.

CHAPTER 19

To be honest, I was quite nervous until I opened my smartphone to check the reaction of the 1st episode.

'I thought I might become too much of a laughingstock—'

However, surprisingly, viewers reacted more favorably to me than mockingly.

Even when the chorus of <POP☆CON> came out, public opinion completely turned around.

In a favorable nuance.

– It's so fun.

– You're cute ㅠㅠ You're very focused.

– Just be honest, you come to the audition to do this ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

-Yeah, if you come out, you have to work hard. It's good to see you like this.

– No, I mean, he looks like a different person from the interview ㅋㅋㅋ

– So cute.

'This is cute?'

It was true that I prepared the song selection strategically.

However, I thought it would be at the level of 'I've worked hard, so I'll pass,' but it was an unexpected gain.

Isn't it the rule of an audition program viewer to despise someone bad?

I was a little confused, but soon I understood the situation.

'It's because I sang well just before.'

First of all, since it's a situation when the singer has to be good at singing to meet their traditional expectations, even if the dance is only not at an embarrassing level, they would be able to leave it generously.

However, the character seems more emphasized by taking care of the laughter.

That character was—a bit embarrassing, though.

'I chose a general answer on purpose, but it came out like this.'

Basically, it was to not leave room for a clue to be held. (꼬투리를 잡히다 or a clue is held meaning is for something to become a pretext for someone to provoke a quarrel.)

In addition to that, in order to emphasize the main vocal position, I have responded smoothly to everything.

In the interview, I didn't mention any personal opinions and only said objective words that wouldn't go against the social consensus.

'But— I had no idea people would prefer a nuance like soulless.'

Anyway, even if it is the wrong way, it doesn't matter as long as I reach Seoul. I tried to take KTX, but it means I don't mind taking the express bus. (T/n : 모로 가도 서울만 가면 된다 used when one wants to say that achieving a goal is more important than how it is done. So even if it is the wrong way, it doesn't matter as long as you reach Seoul.)

'I got through the first step well.'

It was clear that I had secured early recognition. This is not just a hunch but a real result.

This is because the status window popped up while I watched the broadcast.

[The beginning of fame (2)!]

10,000 people remembered your existence!

: Point +1

[Calling for fame!]

50,000 people remembered your existence!

: Draw Rare Characteristics ☜ Click!

With one broadcast, the number jumped to 50,000.

'The sense of reality disappears.'

I decided to look at the rewards that appeared in the pop-up later and instead opened the search box and entered keywords.

[Relisting! Idol Inc. ratings]

The results came right away.

[Average ratings: 3.7%, Highest ratings in one moment: 6.8%]

Oh my God.

'…Isn't this the first episode of the failed cable entertainment program?'

I guess I succeeded in pulling the aggro properly. (T/n : aggro is a meaningless behavior or talk to take others' attention.)

Of course, objectively speaking, it wasn't a crazy high rating.

Regardless of whether people liked me or not, the fact that 100,000 of them remembered Park Moondae means that I made quite an impression.

Now, let's take a closer look at the 'likes and dislikes' section.

After checking the overall flow of public opinion in the first episode, I immediately checked my evaluation video clip.

[Pure 100% twist of an ordinary participant! park Moondae]

I feel like my hands and feet have disappeared. (T/n: It's an idiom people use when they find themselves in a very embarrassing situation.)

'...Let's get it out of my head quickly.'

Then I checked the best comments first.

– Huh? POP☆CON is here? ㅋㅋ 👍 7326/ 👎181)

– I fell asleep while watching, and then I woke up. Moondae-ya, Nuna will buy you every single one of them until you become famous. (👍4522 / 👎294)

– Yep, the main vocalist this time is Park Moondae (👍2061 / 👎372)

"Hmm."

First of all—It was a good sign that the embarrassingly liked comments were at the top. It was a bit strange— but thank you.

However, the critical factor was a fairly high rate of 'Dislike'.

Compared with other contestants who have been favorably edited— for example, Cha Eugene, I think it's roughly 1.5 times bigger.

It meant that there were quite a few people who didn't like *'Park Moondae'* who appeared on the broadcast. So maybe it's the thing that's not social that's the problem.

So, what is the most effective appeal I can make at this point?

The negative image that has already been created is unavoidable, but there are many idols who use this as a gimmick to make them laugh.

Just thinking about it right now— hmm, there's probably more than one for every idol group.

So there's only one thing I have to do in the next shoot.

'I have to look friendly.'

I immediately came up with the next search word.

[Idol Inc. PR Video.]

The next shooting was the production of a PR video.

There are still three days left, so let's find the most meaningful examples before then.

* * *

The PR video shooting for 〈Idol Inc.〉 was done live.

However, they recorded the process of preparing the PR video like an entertainment show. It was a small content that was used to kill time at the ranking announcement.

"Everyone! Are you ready?"

"Yes!"

Participants answer with great enthusiasm when they hear the clear sound of the MC in charge.

'...I feel like I see this every time I shoot... Or is it a mistake?'

Anyway, the important thing was that the participants became more desperate.

"I'm glad that everyone doing well! Okay, do you know what we are preparing for today?"

"PR video!"

"Introduce yourself!"

Because I'm sure everyone has seen the reaction to the first episode.

Everyone must have realized. No matter what they do in front of the camera, it's like nothing happens if it doesn't air.

'So no matter what they do, they can't help but be desperate for a PR video that's being broadcast live.'

In fact, it was never a fair competition.

The live broadcast competition, which was held in a situation where the first episode already decided recognition of the participants, was as if the result had been decided halfway.

However, in the midst of that, there was always a person who turned it over to a PR video every season, so everyone seemed to be desperately preparing for the video without saying anything.

It was a live broadcast of 77 amateurs, so of course, all kinds of controversies followed, but—it seemed like no one cared about that.

The participants will think it's fine as long as it's not them, and the production team will like the rising buzz.

"You'll be doing a live broadcast exclusively for yourself on Tnet's Global WeTube Channel at 8pm tonight!"

"I'm really nervous."

In terms of placement, Keun Sejin, who was standing nearby, was a bit quiet.

He didn't look nervous at all—what a liar.

"Ah, wait a minute. I think I said something wrong!"

"?!?"

"The live broadcast is not just for you!'

As if the MC was enjoying the reaction, he encouraged the response with his arms. The panicked participants shouted.

“What do you think is your dream as a celebrity?”

“Dream—?”

“It’s an , everyone!”

“…!”

The MC spread his arms wide.

“You should each choose a collaboration item to advertise and promote your item with yourself!”

“Yes?!”

These bastards are determined to eat raw. (T/n: 날로 먹다 means that someone gets something easily without working hard.)

Even though that collaboration item sounds plausible, I’d bet my left hand that it was T1’s product that Tnet was just promoting.

It doesn’t matter if you only get one or two to see if something goes viral or not.

It was capitalistic enough to be counted among the crazy tactics of <Idol Inc.>.

‘Didn’t someone rush in at the top?’

The series, which I thought was ruined and ignored, suddenly got a response, so I put a spoon on it. (t/n: I think 숟가락을 얹다 (if someone only puts a spoon on the table) means something like he is responsible for the most part of an achievement, so someone who deserves the credit for that achievement.)

Anyway, the MC’s words were plausible.

“This item may feel like a burden to promote, but please remember that it can also be used as a prop to show off your charm!”

“Ah~”

The participants seemed to be convinced. It was a wise attitude because there was nothing to be done just because they couldn't understand it.

"Then how do you get these props that you'll have?"

"Running?"

"Rock, paper, scissors?"

"Karaoke?"

Examples of programs similar to last season have been shown here and there. The MC shook his head with a sad expression and shouted the correct answer.

"Right away… It's a treasure hunt!"

"Heol?"

"The production crew hid treasure balls with 'items' throughout the dorm. You have the next 15 minutes! All you have to do is find the treasure ball!"

Keun Sejin nodded, and his face showed a little bit of admiration.

"I think this will be fun?"

"…Yeah."

The arrangement that will be interesting to the viewer is right. And the Participants who do this are perfect for dogfights.

With 77 people going through a building, there must be something upsetting.

Of course, they used the contents of the ranking announcement ceremony to relieve tension. It didn't seem like it would be overly serious.

However, there were plenty of ways to shed subtle nuances.

'I can already see all kinds of speculation and rumors coming up on the Internet.'

“Ah! Like an audition program, the treasure ball also has a grade. Please keep that in mind and check the ball carefully!”

It must have been painted in gold, silver, and bronze color.

“All right, get ready—”

Everyone is ready to run.

“Start!”

“Whoa!!!”

With screams, 77 people rushed into the dormitory. I sneaked out and took a step back.

‘Let’s go through the back door.’

No matter how much I thought about it, it was likely that I wouldn’t be able to get any of the treasure if I went with them through the main door.

If I go back and go through the side door, I will have less competition with the other participants.

Then Keun Sejin and Gold 1 followed me.

It sounded like a swindler was groaning.

“Thank you, Moondae-ya. The bus is comfortable.”

“Hyung-nim is smart.”

“…”

It doesn’t matter if there are two of them— but I’m pissed off about how it’s going.

Gold 2 and Seon Ahyun, who were standing a little further apart, seemed to have been swept away by the crowd and entered the front door.

As expected, life is all about timing. What a pity.

* * *

“Oh, Moondae~ You found it right away.”

As soon as I entered through the back door, I immediately found a ball on the threshold.

It was silver.

‘As expected.’

Keun Sejin also nodded, looking at the opaque silver ball.

“The grade, I think it’s divided by bronze, silver and gold, right?”

“Hey, let’s use Korean words that are fair and beautiful! Gold, silver and bronze! How nice is it!”

“Kk~ you’re a patriot.”

If they talk more, let’s just throw them away.

“…Why don’t we speed up the search? The others will be here soon.”

“Yes~”

“Since Moondae is realistic, Hyung feel safe.”

I moved my feet quickly. Surprisingly, the two followed without making any noise.

First, the storage room.

“It’s easy if we think about it the other way. Where can the production crew hide it— hmm, here?”

Keun Sejin smiled and took out a bronze colored ball from the pencil case in front of the camera.

"…!"

"Ah~ bronze. Is this real?"

"Ah, damn it. This dirty hand is not going anywhere." (T/n: 똥손 means bad at picking something or unlucky person.)

Surprisingly—it's worth using.

These guys were quick. Thanks to them, I divided the areas without saying much and searched all the storage in an instant.

"Ah, I found another silver! Shall we move now?"

"I agree."

"I agree."

They're also quick to judge the situation. I moved quickly to the next area without waiting.

"Where?"

"Let's go to the restaurant first. There's a camera."

"Moondae has good eyes."

"As expected, he's the man who found the back door."

"…"

It—would have been better if I hadn't said that.

There was no time to waste at the restaurant.

All three of them started searching around the area where the cameras were located.

It was when I opened the spoon and chopsticks box.

“I found it.”

“Heol!”

“It’s gold.”

I got a gold ball.

“Why do all of us have a gold grade, but Moondae was the first one to find it?”

“It can’t be helped. Hyung-nim. I think it’s because Moondae has a golden hand.” (T/n : 금손 or golden hand means good at picking something or lucky person.)

“That’s right. As expected, you can’t beat someone who’s born with it~”

“The other kids are coming.”

“Ah.”

They finally know how to shut up. All I have to do is give them something to do.

Anyway, when I heard rushing footsteps, I left the restaurant quickly.

“Go upstairs?”

“Yes.”

The same search was repeated upstairs as it was. It was efficient this way.

“Hey~ It’s good that the three of us came!”

“That’s right! Honestly, Moondae agrees with this, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Oh~”

I’ll be honest.

I've benefited from these two guys. It was efficient when three people searched together.

Overall, they had good eyesight and movement, so it was easy to search and move quickly. Their judgement was also good.

Not the strangely stubborn ones, but the distribution ended nicely.

"Then we— did we find 4 gold, 2 silver, and 4 bronze?"

Keun Sejin presented a palm-sized plastic ball.

Gold 1 said carefully.

"Yeah. Well— each of us has one of each color, and Moondae took us away, so let's give it gold instead of silver. What do you think?"

"I like it~"

It's good that it ended neatly, but I shouldn't leave any room for evil editing.

When I first realized the power of editing, I felt very uncomfortable.

"Oh, then I won't take the bronze one. Take two each."

"Oh~ Thank you!"

"Okay!"

As we each took our own balls, an announcement came out at the dormitory.

– There are 200 seconds left~

For reference, we were hiding in a storage room next to the back door of the road to avoid the crowds of participants.

It wouldn't be ridiculous to be robbed here.

"Hyung, the kids are coming in!"

“Hey! Let’s run!”

We quickly exited the back door and headed for the meeting point.

“Ah~ farming nice~.”

“After all, it’s our teamwork. It’s relentless.”

These brats have all relaxed, and they’re all talking again.

Participants who had already found one or two balls opened them on their own at the meeting point.

So far, no one has tried to steal it by force.

‘They’ll notice that there are cameras all over the place.’

They seemed to be psychologically hesitant to steal the opponent’s ball openly.

“Wow, shall we open it too?”

“Okay~”

“Yeah.”

We started to open up the ball when we returned to our position.

Keun Sejin and Gold 1 had a lot of balls in their hands, so there were a lot of jealous eyes.

Still, two higher grades would be better. Even if they get a few vague things, it’s hard for them to choose just one.

I turned two gold balls open.

And I hardened.

“…”

Wait.

CHAPTER 20

Each of the two gold balls obtained through the treasure hunt contained a note.

[Guitar.]

[Flower Crown.]

"…Ah."

There's no answer.

Guitar? I can't play it.

Flower crown? Maybe the content can be mixed with the appearance stat A grade.

No, even if I put all my points on my appearance, the flower crown wasn't a good option.

Because it is an item with which I am unfamiliar with.

Both items are objectively high in grade, but to me, they are landmines.

'I'm going crazy.'

I should exchange it with a note that Keun Sejin or Gold 1 didn't pick it. If not, probably with other participants.

The moment I was about to turn around, the participants poured into the meeting place.

– There are 20 seconds left~~

"Whoaaa!"

"Hey, wait! Wait!"

When they heard the announcement, it looked like they ran quickly to the meeting place so they wouldn't lose the ball.

Is it possible to break through that gap and make a trade request?

When I had an uneasy feeling, a familiar face caught my eye.

It was Seon Ahyun, whose face was pale.

He had a bronze ball in his hand.

I have to say that saving even a bronze ball is impressive with that personality.

But judging by the look on his face, he didn't seem to have been able to get it.

At that moment, I saw the note inside the bronze ball that had already been opened.

[Frozen food]

It's a jackpot.

I quickly got through the crowd and approached Seon Ahyun.

– 5 seconds left!

Seon Ahyun had a perplexed look.

– 5!

"H, hey—"

"Do you know how to play the guitar?"

– 4!

"That, yeah, I, I can play—"

"Do you like flowers?"

– 3!

“Y, yes.”

“Then, do you want to exchange it with me?”

– 2!

“H, huh?”

I’ll take it as a positive answer.

– 1!

I handed over two gold balls in my hand and took the bronze ball.

– Ding! The treasure hunt is over!

Seon Ahyun had a bewildered expression on his face.

As cheers and sighs echoed around me, I joyfully looked down at the bronze ball in my hand.

It was a great trade.

I traded one bronze ball for two gold balls. There’s no way I’ll get criticized for that, right?

* * *

<Relisting! Idol Inc.>’s PR live starts at 7:50 pm on Thursday.

Related communities and SNS on the Internet were full of opinions and excitement.

– 77 people are wasting their time by doing the same live broadcasts again this season? ㅋㅋㅋ Even if they failed, they couldn’t even make up their minds. ㅋㅋㅋ

– These crazy bastards suck at PPL, but they are openly advertising it? How vulgar.

– ★☆ Kim Raebin ☆★ is doing a live broadcast with this face. Even if you don't say anything, it's amazing content, right? (Photo)

– Even if our Eugene advertises a massage chair, I will buy it right away.

– I'm so annoyed that these pigs are playing with this kind of commercial trick.

└ So if you purchase through the video link, all profits will be donated?

└ Anyway, the crazy female fans will believe in everything~ ㅋㅋㅋ Yeah, the next pigs.

– I hope it ends well without hurting the participants ㅠㅠㅠㅠ

└ That's the funniest thing. ㅋㅋㅋㅋ What are you saying?

It was a chaotic place where different types of human beings expressed freely, but there was one thing that was certain.

It is said that the number of times participants were mentioned jumped several times.

Those who saw the first episode and felt favorable to the participants themselves were really waiting with anticipation for the content.

And at 8 pm as scheduled.

'Real-time broadcasting' has appeared on the WeTube channel.

– Hey, it's up.

– Yeah.

– It's coming.

– I can't watch it because I'm working overtime. Please relay the number of viewers. Who is the first place?

ㄴCha Eugene! There's a thousand times difference from last place. ㅋㅋㅋㅋ I see seven people in last place. Poor thing ㅠㅠ

– Wongil did apple hair ㅠㅠㅠ Everyone, come see us

– Crazy, Seon Ahyun wore a flower crown. His face is crazy.

Soon all kinds of sales posts about the participants began to be rampant. There were a lot of comments that only said what they had to say, and it was almost to the point of covering up malicious comments.

It was then.

– Huh, who's filming a Mukbang?

ㄴ? What are you talking about?

ㄴNo, I mean, what is he eating so earnestly?

ㄴWhat are you talking about in the self-introduction video?

ㄴNo, it's real;;; (link.)

Some people who are interested click the link and watch the video.

"Hello."

Park Moondae's face appeared on the screen.

While holding chicken feet in his hand.

Participants couldn't see the real-time comments, but Park Moondae's live comments were already exploding.

– No, I mean, Moondae-ya, why are you holding chicken feet?

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ Moondae again.

– After popcorn, boneless chicken feet appeared.

– Wasn't it a self-introduction video? Is there chicken feet for real?

– Why the hell did you choose this? Is it a penalty? ㅋㅋㅋ

– I really want to communicate. I really want to ask a question ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

In contrast to the comment box, Park Moondae continued to say that the chicken feet in his hand aren't a big deal.

"Well, the product I'm promoting today is— the boneless grilled chicken feet from T1 Foods."

Park Moondae was sitting at a table that had an iron plate on it.

The boneless chicken feet in disposable gloves look delicious, but compared to the other participants' video thumbnails, they created a strong impression of differentiation.

"First—I'll eat and review it."

Park Moondae boldly eats the chicken feet in one bite. Then he chewed hard, swallowed, and opened his mouth again.

"First of all, the grilled taste is good, and it's not too spicy, so I think I can keep eating it. Since there is no smell, the aftertaste is clean. The texture is also really good."

– Is he a former WeTuber who specialized in Mukbang?

– I told you to talk about yourself! Moondae, you can talk about food to the public ㅠㅠ

– Let's give up. I should have known because you worked so hard with popcorn.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ Ah, this is so funny.

– Our Moondae lacks social skills, but he's a good kid.

The comments roared at Park Moondae, who was sincere about the review. But soon, the atmosphere changed again.

Park Moondae's Mukbang was more worth watching than they thought.

– But he eats really well.

– He ate it quickly without spilling it.

– When he chews with his mouth closed, he looks so cute. ㅠㅠ

– I think he'll score points if all he does at the meeting is eat.

– Moondae-ya, I hope you can eat chicken feet wrapped in perilla leaves ㅠㅠ

ㄴㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ Mission complete.

– You eat so well while putting it in your mouth.

– As expected, it's nice to see you eat well.

And Park Moondae diligently continued the review.

The comment box turned over when he brought out tuna mayo triangle kimbap and said it was good with chicken feet.

By then, there had already been a post on SNS and in the community.

[Idol Inc. participant who's doing a real-time Mukbang.jpg]

: Wow, Park Moondae is eating chicken feet

I thought he was the main vocalist, but he's a Mukbang star on WeTube?

I think Park Moondae's PR video is crazyㅋㅋ

The number of viewers increased quickly.

The number of viewers of Park Moondae, which was originally quite high, was now entering the top 5.

Participants couldn't see the comments, but they could see the number of viewers. Park Moondae blinked when he saw the number of viewers surpassing 10,000 viewers.

"There are… a lot of viewers. Thank you. I'll do my best."

– Moondae-ya, it's not like that, please talk about yourself now ㅠㅠ

– Why is it so nice to see him eating?

– Is he a new Mukbang BJ? Hw eat well.

– He is an idol audition participant!

– He is a participant who sings well.ㅋㅋㅋ

– But why is he eating?

– We don't know that either. ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– I never thought that he would keep eating and not sing even one verse.

Park Moondae was reviewing the taste of triangle kimbap in detail.

At that moment, an alarm went off on the clock in the corner of Park Moondae's desk.

"Oh, the time is up."

They were basically given 10 minutes to do the PR video live.

And, after converting the number of viewers and likes into numbers, only the top 33 received 5 minutes of extra time and a special gift.

'These bastards are acting without conscience while even forcing us to do promotions,' Park Moondae thought, but he only nodded his head without

expressing it.

“It might be over, so I’ll greet you in advance. Thank you.”

Park Moondae gave a slight nod. After a short pause, as if he were thinking, he added.

“…Please watch Episode 2 of <Relisting! Idol Inc>.”

– It’s an example sentence given by the production team, I will bet 1,000 won

– This kid really can’t say empty words ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– It’s okay, Moondae, you’re cute.

– That’s right, he’s cute.

– He’s good at singing and good at eating. Grandma is happy because of this baby.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋ Everyone got into it, it’s really funny ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

About 10 seconds after Park Moondae’s greetings, the screen suddenly showed a bell ringing.

“Ah, I think the results are out.”

Park Moondae took the old smartphone from under the desk. It looks like the production team sent him a text message with the results.

However, the comments that already knew that Park Moondae remained in the top 33 were paying attention to something else.

– It’s an old-fashioned phone.

– It’s frugal.

– He’s so smart.

– If you don't use Apple Phone, you will be treated as a primitive person, and you use an old phone… are they drawn to it?

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ Everyone must be crazy.

– Moondae-ya, Noona will buy you an Apple Phone. So our Moondae, let's debut ㅠㅠ

Park Moondae chose a free phone to live a minimum life within the budget, but an unexpected synergy was coming out.

Anyway, since Park Moondae also guessed his high rank, there was no tension when the results were announced.

"Ah, I'm in the top 33 so I can continue broadcasting. Thank you for the next 5 minutes and please take care of me. I will work hard."

Park Moondae bowed his head and quickly picked up the chicken feet again. Then he took another bite.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋ Are you telling us to take care of you while you're doing a Mukbang?

– I find it funniest when he is being serious. ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– No, please introduce yourself at least in the extra time ㅋㅋㅋ

– Ah ㅠㅠ Moondae-ya, don't say anything like that, please release TMI. What is your favorite color, do you like cats or dogs, or at least please tell me about your MBTI ㅠㅠ

The speed at which the comments are coming up has increased tremendously. So even if Park Moondae was watching, it was impossible to read.

Then, Park Moondae's smartphone rang again. This time, it was the production team.

'What is it? Is it a special gift or something?'

"We have another announcement for the production team. Wait a moment—"

Park Moondae checked the text. It was quite long.

[Special gift for participants! It is communication with viewers! Viewer donations are now available! Participants can check the donation pop-up with a threshold amount of <10,000 won> or more.

Please tell the viewers.^^ (※All the donations amount must be announced!)]

The idea behind donating such an amount of the donation was to avoid any possible controversies.

However, considering that the donation is received by the participant and the donation is carried out in the name of the program, it was frankly disgusting.

'I know they wouldn't spend money and would do this.'

Park Moondae thought indifferently but read the text aloud as it was.

– Donation??

– I guess they set it at 10,000 won to block aggro.

– Hey, what kind of donation is that? It's just to save the participant's face anyway. ;;

– If we give it to a participant, they'll swear that it's vulgar again, but they're just living with their mouths anyway. ;; (t/n: 입만 살았다 means someone who only talks but does nothing.)

– If I pay the chicken price for Moondae, will he do another chicken Mukbang?

– The level of the RII's small store has come down.

– They're crazy fast.

– Is it chicken?

– ㅋㅋㅋ Someone please ask quickly, why is it chicken feet? ㅋㅋㅋ

“Ah, 123-nim. thank you…”

Park Moondae was fighting the deep reality while reading the donation text that came up on the screen.

CHAPTER 21

The first donation comment was straightforward.

#Why did you choose chicken feet? ㅋㅋㅋ

People buzzed that it was a great question in the comments. Park Moondae pondered for a moment, then answered honestly.

“Uhm, actually, my collaboration item keyword was frozen food, not chicken feet.”

– Wow, how shady.

– When I look at the chicken feet again, it looks like a fairy.

– RII punk, why did you guys put frozen food in idol PR—?

– Why do you put dumplings as a candidate when there’s carbonated water in T1? ㅋㅋㅋ

Park Moondae, who couldn’t see the comments, continued speaking quietly.

“The chicken feet were the most delicious among the frozen foods I received as a sample. So I chose the chicken feet.”

– !!

– You… tried all the samples?

– This participant is a ‘real.’

– At this point, it’s not enough to laugh at how hard he’s working. ㅋㅋㅋ

“First of all, it’s an — however it’s hard to say that something that doesn’t taste good is delicious.”

As Park Moondae answered, he grabbed the chicken foot again and put it in his mouth. And right away, more donations came pouring in without a break.

#What's your favorite food besides chicken feet?

#Who is the participant you're closest to?

#Then, for what criteria did you choose for triangle kimbap? ㅋㅋㅋ

"I'm not picky about food and I eat everything well. I'll skip the close participants — uhm, I think it'll be a spoiler if I say it."

– He's very thorough. ㅋㅋㅋ

– It's true that our Moondae have close friends, right? Grandma believes in the Moondae! *^^*

– But Seon Ahyun said he was close to you in the next broadcast over there. ㅋㅋㅋ

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋ I got it, Moondae-ya, are you close with Ahyun?

From Park Moondae's point of view, talking directly about someone could be dangerous, so he chose to speak vaguely.

But even that topic was played with in the comments.

And just as Park Moondae was carefully explaining why he chose the triangle kimbap, the donations that had been held up started coming in all at once.

"The tuna mayonnaise is strong and goes well with chicken feet like a sauce— ah."

#Moondae_please_just_sing_one_verse_of_a_songㅠㅠ

#Don't just eat too much, and please introduce yourself. ㅋㅋㅋ

#Is there a secret to singing well?

“Uhm. Singing.”

Park Moondae put down the last chicken feet he was going to eat.

– Finally.

– Is his idol ego awakened?

– Is it meaningful that he only came back to life with one chicken foot left—.

– No, Moondae, your singing is really good, and when I watch the team battle, it’s so amazing.ㅠㅠ

– It was good on the show, but how will the live show be?

While there were a lot of comments, Park Moondae started singing.

“I’m standing on the stage, you don’t know yet~.”

It was the broadcast theme song <It’s Me>.

Park Moondae only selected songs that had already been well-received by the trainers without much thought, but from the viewers’ point of view, it was nothing but solidifying the character.

– Park Moondae, he’s a professional

– Wouldn’t he be a more sincere participant than anyone else?

– It’s really unpredictable. It’s not the way the criminal thinks.

– I’m going crazy. This is so funny ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

The comments were overflowing with people joking around. But that wasn’t all.

– But you’re good at singing

– Why is chicken feet sweet when it’s caught in one cut?

– It’s good to hear even without music

– Good job, Moondae-ya, please sing another song now ㅠㅠ

Even though Park Moondae used low-quality equipment, his voice was clearly heard even though 77 people were broadcasting live at the same time.

Without blurring parts, Park Moondae brought the song along in a cool way.

It was a nice voice to listen to without a single uncomfortable note.

As if to concentrate, the speed at which the comments come up has slowed down slightly. Exclamations were mixed in with the reaction.

And past the last part of the pre-chorus, it was when the chorus began.

“On the stage—”

Riiing!

The alarm rang loudly from the clock on the desk.

It was a reminder that there were only 30 seconds left. It was showing that the five extra minutes were over.

“Ah, time’s up.”

Park Moondae immediately stopped singing.

It’s because he didn’t intend to create controversy by wasting time and adding more songs.

The problem was that he quit too abruptly.

– No, if you cut it off here.

– Of all things, right before the chorus ㅋㅋㅋ

– Argh, it's frustrating! I'll just sing it. I'm the one who shines on stage right now!! Arghh!

– Don't you see that this is the big picture that makes you watch episode two? Moondae-ssi is serious about the program.

– If he hadn't eaten one chicken foot, could he have sung all of verse 1?

– I wish you could sing even one verse right now ㅠㅠ Oh my gosh, Moondae-ya.

A delayed donation appeared on the screen.

#I love your voice!

Comments flooded more due to the mild donation, contrary to the current comment atmosphere.

"Thank you. I'll do my best. Uhm, come to think of it, the remaining donation questions—."

Park Moondae quickly looked through the questions again, capturing "self-introduction" and "the secret to singing." And he thought.

'It was rather fortunate that I didn't have enough time.'

In fact, Park Moondae was delaying the answer to the next donation by wasting time with songs on purpose because it was difficult to answer the question.

First, self-introduction—he had nothing to say because he came into someone else's body.

This is because he didn't fully understand the background of 'Park Moondae.' Moreover, the background he had already grasped was quite dark.

The secret to being good at singing was more difficult to say.

'Can I say the system window helps? That sounds crazy.'

Park Moondae finished his judgment in an instant and continued.

“First, let me introduce myself.”

At that moment, the screen turned black.

[The live is over]

The broadcast time is over.

– ??

– What?

– I think it’s over?

– The production team ended the broadcast altogether

The remaining viewers were confused but soon understood the situation and started laughing.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– In the end, I can’t hear the self-introduction—.

– I feel like I just watched Mukbang in the.

– It’s been a while since I had so much fun.

– No, I mean, Park Moondae is really funny ㅋㅋㅋㅋ A comedian in question.

People left comments in the real-time comment box that was still alive.

However, quite a number of people remained for quite a while and continued to leave comments. They were the people who became interested in Park Moondae.

They were very excited to talk about the differences between Park Moondae in the first episode and Park Moondae in the last PR Live.

-But Moondae is really cute— With a face that doesn’t seem motivated like that, he eats well and sings well ㅠㅠ. He’s the best even without tricks.

– He has a trendy face, so once he gets his finishing touches, he'll be very handsome.

– Good. I'm going to open my fan account today.

– Where can I vote?

– Idol Inc. website -> Stock purchase window. You can get one extra vote per day if you buy the Collaboration Bundle.

– That's a great business skill.

– I gave one vote because Moondae is cute.

In the comments, criticism of the voting method that had risen was continued, but soon the topic returned to Park Moondae's previous broadcast.

– In the meantime, he ate chicken feet so deliciously. ㅠㅠ I ended up going to the link and bought it.

– I ordered delivery now. Thank you, Moondae, I ruined my diet at night with chicken feet.

Then suddenly, a comment said something out of the blue.

– But why am I so familiar with Moondae's eating place? I think I've seen it somewhere

– Huh, really?

– Did you film an for formula when you were a baby? (Excited.)

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ Moondae said he had no experience in the entertainment industry.

– Oh, I found it. This is it. Exactly the same. (link)

The link led to a video of chicken feet Mukbang.

The appearance of putting chicken feet in one bite and chewing them in one bite was exactly the same as the live broadcast they saw before.

It was just a different species.

[A countryside dog chicken feet Mukbang!]

In the video, a big dog of unknown breed was eating raw chicken feet.

The channel name is 'Exploring the diet of mixed breed dogs in the countryside.'

The black fur dog with its pricked ears, wags its tail with a face that looks like it has been pushed back, and eagerly puts chicken feet into its mouth.

Above it, Park Moondae's indifferent Mukbang overlapped on its own.

– Oh my.

At that moment, Park Moondae's first nickname was decided.

* * *

– Look at this. They look the same ㅋㅋㅋ From now on, Park Moondae is Moon Puppy. No objection received. (Screenshot of mixed breed dogs in the countryside.) (Screenshot of Park Moondae live)

In the SNS post shared more than 4,000 times, they posted a scene of me in the form of 'Park Moondae' putting a boneless chicken foot in my mouth and a picture of a large dog biting a chicken feet together.

I feel a little upset.

First, it seemed like it worked to change the negative image— by making it feel like something familiar but.

"Moon Puppy…"

I didn't expect to have such an embarrassing nickname at the age of 29.

There have been a few times in my life that I have been told that I eat well.

'I think it's because I'm not picky about food—'

It was simply because I couldn't afford to eat after my parents died.

So I didn't expect such a reaction from eating only a little chicken feet.

"Is it 4th place?"

Shortly after the live, the PR video was uploaded, and the current ranking of the views of my video was in my fingers.

It was even still on the rise. If I did well, I was expected to flip the video of Lee Sejin, the former child actor who came in third place.

I decided to adapt to the situation.

'I'm embarrassed but it's a good situation.'

I couldn't be picky about situations because I could die suddenly at any time. In addition, I feel more curious than embarrassed. So I feel a bit—thankful about it.

'Thanks to it, I am one step away from sudden death.'

I briefly thanked the people who posted SNS posts and those who shared them, and started thinking about the next thing.

Now there was one near problem.

How will my editing come out in the second episode that will air soon?

In particular, the platinum grade on the grade evaluation came to mind.

'Even if the editing is a little sloppy, I think there will be a response like 'He should have received it, but Park Moondae the one who received it'.'

I turned on the live-streaming window on my smartphone, feeling a little nervous.

Still, episode 2 was good because I didn't shoot unnecessary reactions. Thanks to that, I was able to get a beer can as well.

[Relisting! Idol~ Inc.!]

When I heard Youngrin's voice in the beginning, I sipped my beer slowly. And focus on the content.

"…"

By the end of episode 2, there were two cans of beer next to the smartphone.

I drank my last beer and thought.

'I think it was fine?'

The production team also carefully edited my grade evaluation.

I made sure again through the judges' comments that I was good at the choreography and that the pitch was accurate, and then they stamped that I was good.

Even the scene receiving the Platinum grade didn't get much attention. They just treated it like *'Of course, a participant who does this kind of thing should get it~'.*

They didn't even put the controversy over the judgment at all.

"What are you thinking?"

I can't help but feel the alcohol is in it. I reflected on my editorial direction.

'There is a part—that bothers me.'

They didn't show anything about how I practiced for a week without sleeping.

They couldn't show all the circumstances of the 77 participants, so even if that was the case, it was strange that they had to send out the scene where I asked Seon Ahyun for the choreography.

It also bothered me that they edited it as if they listened to it once and followed the whole choreography.

'Now that I think about it, they put the interviews that didn't make me seem very impressive when I got the grade.'

Hmm, after summarizing it so far, I got a feeling.

The production team seemed to keep pushing the character of *'Park Moondae'* in the first episode.

To put it bluntly—the *'Tactless My-Face-Ordinary talented person'* character.

Fortunately, thanks to PR Live, Internet public opinion has already given me the image of a chicken feet puppy.

'I guess I would let it slide.'

I checked it by turning on SNS right away. As expected, the people who used a clever puppy gimmick on Park Moondae in episode 2 were the first to win over public opinion.

Fortunately, I couldn't let my guard down. Because the editing could win everything.

'Should I save more puppies?'

Drrrt!

My smartphone rang while I was thinking.

It was Keun Sejin. I felt meticulous from the texting, not messaging apps.

[Moondae, what do you think about watching episode 3 together with our team?]

Do I have to? I immediately started writing replies.

'I'm sorry, but I have work to do then—'

As soon as I tried to refuse with a good reason, I got another text message after another.

[Don't tell me—When Moondae is the only one missing, don't sad things happen? Lee Sejin Hyung-nim said he would come too!]

"…"

Have they all already agreed?

This brat will be the one who told the production team that they watched it together and sent a photo as proof.

The editing direction is already suspicious, but I didn't know what would happen if I was the only one left out.

I change the text slowly.

[Yeah, we should do it.]

Then I got a reply right away.

[ㅎㅎ I knew Moondae will like it too~ I'll see you then!]

"…"

I feel—like I lost.

CHAPTER 22

I tried to build up my stamina by exercising and practicing at the same time until the 3rd episode aired.

Fortunately, the qualities of Park Moondae were not at the bottom, so I could follow it exactly as I wanted.

The unfortunate thing is that most of the practice achievements have been filled up to 500 times.

'And I don't think it will be easy for me to quickly level up my stats from now on.'

Nevertheless, it was fortunate that the stat reward would occasionally pop up whenever I achieved success on stage or fame.

Anyway, after spending a full week, it returned to Friday again.

I headed to the location of the appointment around 5 p.m.

It was an officetel located quite far from Seoul's outer station, and it was probably the home of someone from the former team.

And I experience something amazing in the process of coming out of the subway station.

"Excuse me!"

"Yes?"

"By any chance… aren't you from Idol Inc.?"

Someone asked me something like this.

To be honest, the question is just a formality, but that person's eyes were already shining with certainty.

I pondered for a moment, then nodded.

I didn't even wear a mask. Because even if someone takes a picture of me, I would still be in a situation where I would be unable to take it, replace it, and lie about it.

"Yes, that's right."

"Ah, as expected!"

The woman who spoke to me was clearly happy.

"I'm really enjoying it. And you're really good at singing… Excuse me, can I take a picture with you?"

What should I do with this?

At the thought that Keun Sejin could leave photo evidence, I make sure to dress modestly and come out. However, unlike when I was filming, I didn't have any makeup on.

(t/n: 인증샷 means take a photo to prove it happened. For this sentence, it's meant to prove it they really met a celebrity or something.)

I know this since I've taken photos of it before. So unless it's acceptable, most idols' bare-faced photos need to be edited.

'…So, when I take photos during rehearsal, I will sometimes add full editing before selling them because of my conscience.'

However, it was more important not to make noise in the current situation.

"Yes. Can I look here?"

"Oh! Yes, yes, wait a minute—!"

The woman quickly turned on the camera editing app and took a picture together in selfie mode.

It's good that this person understands the importance of morals in society.

“Ah, thank you so much. I will definitely vote, no, I will buy stocks!”

“Ah, thank you.”

There’s a high probability that she won’t do it because she can’t even remember Park Moondae’s name, but let’s say thank you first.

Anyway, because of how this person reacted, everyone started to look at this place. It gradually became burdensome as people passing by began to look at us.

I quickly nodded and said my final words.

“I have something to do…”

“Oh, yes! Thank you for the photo…”

The question, *‘But what are you going to do?’* seemed to come up at any moment, so I quickly left.

And as soon as I left the station, I bought a mask at the convenience store.

There is nothing to say, even if it is called excessive self-consciousness, and since there has already been a case, I was going to be careful on the way back.

But I can’t believe someone recognized me on the street already. Of course, I already knew that season 3 would do well, but it was amazing.

‘It would be no joke around the second half of the show.’

The place I’m currently staying in is just a cheap room, so the security was poor. If Park Moondae continues to keep avoiding the full editing, steps may need to be taken in the future. (t/n: 통편집 means full editing or totally removed from the scene.)

As I walked and thought about this and that, I soon arrived at the meeting place. I wonder if it’s a newly built officetel because it looks clean and secure.

I don’t know whose house it is, but whoever lives there seems to be doing well. I’m so envious.

“Oh~ Moondae really come fast? Come in!”

“H, hello.”

When I rang the doorbell, Keun Sejin and Seon Ahyun came out.

“This is the living room~.”

Seon Ahyun followed as Keun Sejin guided me. Anyway, it seems like this is Keun Sejin’s house.

Well, it’s a natural picture for a meeting host to invite people to his house.

I honestly admire the really nice officetel’s interior as I look around.

“It’s a nice house.”

“Right? It would be nice if it was my house!”

“…?”

Does that mean it’s not the house he rents?

The brief question ended with Seon Ahyun’s words.

“T, thank you.”

“…”

So… this was Seon Ahyun’s house.

Meanwhile, Keun Sejin was almost lying on the living room sofa, and Seon Ahyun was sitting in a straight position in the corner of the sofa.

I looked at the strange situation where the roles of the host and the guest were switched for a moment, but then I stopped thinking.

So what? Let’s just watch episode 3 and then leave.

* * *

In the editorial room on the 9th floor of the Tnet building, the production team of <Idol Inc.> is working overtime today.

“The editing was delayed too much because of the preparation of the PR video live.”

“I’m going crazy.”

It was somehow a chilly situation because the finished version was just completed a few hours before the airing.

Writer Ryu Seorin thought it was annoying.

‘This is why it would have been better if the PR was just outsourced.’

Even if she pushed the ad, she couldn’t use outsourcing because it would only add a small amount to the cost of production.

Thanks to this, her schedule, which was barely free because of the youngest writer, became a series of all-night.

In addition, the edited version that she checked while working on the subtitles—was so unexpected.

‘Why did they kill the kids and pushed them away?’

Ryu Seorin’s own suggestion wasn’t properly reflected!

She wanted to grind her teeth, but she was too tired to do it. She even looks pale because she had been up all night for two days in a row.

‘It’s not like I have any power anyway.’

Still, it was a suggestion for making the program more fun, so it was a shame.

‘After seeing the editing direction for episodes 1 and 2, I was expecting a bit.’

She sighed and left the editing room.

She thought about taking a nap in the night-duty room and coming back in an hour before the broadcast.

* * *

“It’s start!”

“Whoa, whoa! Please our team in this episode! please!”

After episodes 1 and 2 were aired, they were all excited to see about the reactions of their acquaintances, but there wasn’t anything useful in those reactions.

– Moondae, would you like chicken feet?

…It was the most memorable thing I had ever asked, and I asked it with a grin.

Anyway, after pretending to listen to it, it was soon airtime.

‘It’s nice to see it on the big screen.’

I thought casually as I looked at the big TV on the wall that took up a quarter of the living room wall.

“Ah, it’s start.”

Seeing them sitting on the couch or on the floor with their stomachs full made it seem like they wouldn’t get in the way of monitoring, which was also pretty good.

[Since this is the first team match, there must be a participant that you all want to join, right?]

As soon as the words of the MC entered the broadcast, an interview was inserted.

[Cha Eugene: If I can do it with Raebin!]

[Lee Sejin (B): Me? Ah, Moondae will be nice!]

[Park Moondae: Lowered his head.]

“Whoaa, the hyungs are here!!”

“Keun Sejin Hyung’s interview cut is nice.”

“Whoa, I’m talking about you though! But it doesn’t appear.”

When one of the team members is caught on camera, everyone reacts proudly.

It’s so hard to focus on the screen that I’m going crazy.

In the meantime, Keun Sejin burst into laughter. It must be good to come out as Lee Sejin (B) because there is a person with the same name.

“Park Moondae, were you really like that? Hahahaha!”

“…No.”

Is that even possible?

Keun Sejin named more than seven people when he should have only mentioned one, but it was clear that only my name was on the air.

Anyway, let’s try to stay focused on the screen.

Despite the chatter, the broadcast continued.

[Whoaa!!]

[I think our team is good?]

First of all, this team decided to come out warmly at the moment.

They mostly showed each other hugging and spinning, so it looked like fun to be with the pure participants.

Surprisingly, the editorial direction of the other team, which had Ryu Chungwoo, a former national archery representative.

[Lee Dojun: Ah, it's a bit…]

[Park Jeongseop: Of all things, why it turned out like this.]

[Choi Sangjin: It's really fun? (Edited) It didn't feel like that.]

[Ryu Chungwoo: Ah. (Laughs)]

Even though the atmosphere wasn't great, the team quickly got used to Ryu Chungwoo as their leader, but the broadcast made it seem like the atmosphere was bad.

"Uh…"

"Uhm."

They were somehow at a loss to make a comment, and the only thing that came out was an ambiguous admiration. It was a situation where it was hard to like and ambiguous to criticize.

After passing through the formation process of other teams, the next step was the selection song process.

Gold 1, which shouts and presses the panel button without looking properly, came out as a single cut.

"Aah…"

Gold 1 felt the pain as he looked at his dark history. Because he seems to have noticed that he looks like he murmured to himself blankly on the screen.

[I, is it a mistake?]

And the editing that followed—wasn't serious.

An interview with the team members came out along with the funny drum and twang BGM.

For reference, Ha Iljoon is Gold 1 and Kwon Heeseung is Gold 2.

[Lee Sejin (B): Did you see our faces?? Just like this!]

[Kwon Heeseung: What… should we do? Pfft…]

[Seon Ahyun: (Laughing and shrugging)]

[Ha Iljun: I'm sorry… Pfft…]

[♡ Into A New World / MallangDalkom ♡]

The panels flashed in the background like a joke.

…And here, for some reason, an interview with Park Moondae appeared.

[Park Moondae: I liked it. (Thumbs up)]

A subtitle appeared.

[Fan's heart wins everything—!☆]

The living room erupted with laughter.

"Ahahaha!"

"Hahaha, my stomach hurts from laughing so hard—!"

Even Lee Sejin is holding back his laughter because his face turns red.

"Pft, is that real? Did you really do that?"

"…I just said I liked the team."

"Ehem, ah~ Really? Thank you."

Keun Sejin laughed and got stuck on the sofa.

While I… just put a chicken in my mouth.

'Let's not get involved.'

After that, even practicing choreography and getting feedback from the trainer through trial and error were set up in a way that wasn't too serious.

[Let's do it like this!]

[Hmm, okay.]

This is because the moderately gloomy early practice was edited as if they were working hard with nothing happened.

When the choreographer was angry, the first tense background sound came out.

[No one sees… What are you going to do?]

After that, a series of personal attacks were sent as it was, with huge subtitles and words emphasized.

"It's really strong when you hear it again."

"I'm just telling you now, but I was really scared."

"Ung, it looks like it."

"Yeah. You too."

When the hardened faces of the team members were shown on the screen, sincerity went back and forth like a joke in the living room.

Fortunately, the scene with Seon Ahyun and the choreographer didn't focus on me. Instead, it mostly showed Seon Ahyun's shocked reaction.

And at an unexpected time, an unexpected scene came out.

[Do you feel tired?]

[N, no…]

In one scene, I talked to Seon Ahyun while he was being edited by the kind of 'Seon Ahyun participant who couldn't focus on practice.'

It was the conversation where I used the characteristic ‘When I heard it, you’re right.’

Even the timing wasn’t right. That was after deciding how the conversation would go.

“H, huh?”

“What is it?”

Seon Ahyun was embarrassed, so he dropped the chicken he had been eating. I was a little puzzled, too.

‘That’s what I said when the main camera was all gone and only the camera installed in the corner turn around.’

I didn’t expect it to be used on the broadcast. However, the camera was fixed, so it felt like it wasn’t recorded.

Thanks to that, the conversation sounded a little more sincere.

[D, do you really think I, I can do well…?]

[Why would I lie?]

[…!!]

When the emotional editing was added, it almost looked like a boy manhwa recruit.

I became confused.

‘No I mean, it’s good that they edited it well, but—.’

It was a random choice, considering how the production team has been building up my character since the first episode.

Did they just decide to replace it quickly?

Meanwhile, Park Moondae on the screen said “that line” while the beautiful BGM played.

[Just think ‘I’m going to make this happen’.]

And the living room rang with a reaction.

“Oh~”

“I’m going to… make this happen?”

“This is how Moondae usually thinks, kyaa~ Quote!”

Let’s just… ignore it.

In the midst of teasing, whether it was booing or admiration, the broadcast showed a short interview with Seon Ahyun.

[Seon Ahyun: T, t, thank you… very much.]

[Seon Ahyun : (I will)… work hard. I, I was thinking like that. I, I have to do it.]

Even though Seon Ahyun doesn’t have a lot of energy, he is very loyal. I greet him immediately.

“Thank you.”

“Uh, uh… N, no, thank you…”

“Ah, it’s heartwarming.”

“That’s right.”

While Seon Ahyun, who had been taken out of the conversation, was embarrassed, the cut that was being arranged with Mudie’s advice finally showed on the TV screen.

[Guys. Let’s set the direction first.]

Yeah, it was the most important here.

CHAPTER 23

Keun Sejin led the arrangement meeting. And I got a fair amount of it.

[Kwon Heeseung: It's a relief that Keun Sejin Hyung-nim is the leader, well!]

[Ha Iljun: He is definitely a friend with leadership.]

Given how the interviews for Gold 1 and 2 turned out, it seems that the production crew purposefully pushed Keun Sejin's leadership.

"Oh, thank you, everyone~."

"If you're thankful, talk about me in the next interview."

"Me too!"

"Ah, of course~."

And in contrast to Keun Sejin's relaxed expression, another participant was staring at the screen in the living room.

I glanced at Choi Wongil.

"…"

Choi Wongil, who was quiet when he came to today's meeting, now had a tense look.

Indeed, how would the production team edit Choi Wongil's argument about me?

From my point of view, it would be fine as long as I didn't come out like I was trying to start a fight. Because in fast, if it's not that, I don't even care at all.

However, the editing also went in an unexpected direction.

They completely edited Choi Wongil's argument.

[The idea is good, but if something goes wrong, wouldn't it be like trying to make fun of the original song?]

Furthermore, Keun Sejin's rebuttal to my words was cut off.

Instead, the figure of Keun Sejin, who raised his head seriously, appeared.

[I've been thinking about it, but I think— there's a way to go strong while keeping the original song's sensibility.]

And it immediately connected as I gave my opinion.

'It seems like they don't need Choi Wongil's story.'

In order to keep the dramatic flow of the arrangement, the ambiguous argument in the picture was edited into nothing.

'Come to think of it, they just skipped it when we changed the parts at the beginning.'

Choi Wongil seemed relieved, but well, I don't know if that's the case.

In the end, Choi Wongil didn't get any good cuts until the very end.

Even at the very least, the interview did not come out well.

Maybe there wasn't much to write about in the interview because he complained a lot about parts and arrangements.

Anyway, that was probably good, and the important thing was my editing.

Just then, Park Moondae, on the screen, finished what he was saying with a faint smile.

[Let's mix it with horror.]

[…!!]

Then, they did close-ups of each team member to show how surprised they were.

'…I think that's too much?'

If anyone saw it, the edit seemed to show that I had come up with a unique idea.

There was even another interview.

[Ha Iljun: Wow! (Moondae) is saying that!]

[Kwon Heeseung: I thought this was it.]

[Lee Sejin (A): That's… So it's a talent.]

Child actor Lee Sejin's words sounded somewhat bitter. But more than that, I couldn't believe this guy had this kind of interview.

Thanks to this, there were a lot of jokes and boos in the living room, and people shot each other with cheesy interviews. Lee Sejin kept his mouth shut and looked at the screen steadfastly.

When Keun Sejin's interview came out, everyone started to laugh.

[Lee Sejin (B): Moondae is really funny, isn't it? (Laughs) No, it's so funny to have an expression like a Tibetan fox and explode with ideas, really!!]

In the background of Keun Sejin's words, 'Park Moondae' was cut and edited to react to all kinds of situations.

[I, I… I… W, when I was young, I had an accident…]

[What should I do…]

As the general public felt sorry for it, Park Moondae's face began to close up.

"…"

As far as I can see, it's calmness itself.

And the subtitles that come up.

[Park Moondae: (Nod–ding).]

“Ah! That’s right!”

“He was really like that! Hahahaha!”

And in the trainer’s harsh criticism scene.

[This kind of review is a compliment you should get at a talent show on a school trip.]

[…]

Park Moondae’s calm face was seen among the team members who bowed their heads and bit their mouths.

[Park Moondae: (Ca–lm.)]

That’s right.

In any situation in which other participants are restless.

Park Moondae was alone and had the same cloudy eyes.

“Hahahahaha!”

“That face! So funny!”

“…”

Only then did I realize that I had lost.

I was alone among the over-action participants, so it didn’t look calm, but it—looked like something was wrong with my mind.

‘I didn’t mean to curse the production team.’

I reflected on myself alone, avoiding the hands of Keun Sejin, who laughed like crazy and hit me on the back saying sorry.

In later broadcasts, the arrangement process went smoothly, which wasn't meant to be a short spoiler.

[Lee Sejin (B): We will do well!]

[Park Moondae:… Fighting.]

I don't know why I shouted "Fighting" so uninspiredly—.

And it wasn't long before the stage started.

The team members, who had been making a lot of noise, quietly focused on watching at this moment.

I looked unfamiliarly at the face of 'Park Moondae' with stage makeup. I can't believe I'm that guy.

[Whooo—]

Soon, a gloomy prelude flowed along with the introductory choreography, and the performance unfolded in earnest.

And each time the part changed, the shocked faces of the other participants who were waiting were inserted. Oh my.

It was fortunate that the stage didn't feel like it was cut off due to the effort put into the editing.

'Hmm.'

Anyway, the stage surely came out well.

In particular, I could see Seon Ahyun flying like a fish in the water. It was to the extent that the main dancer looked like Seon Ahyun, not Sejin. (t/n: 물 만난 고기 means a fish that met water or is in your comfortable field. Or in other words, when you are good at something, you feel very comfortable doing it.)

'I think Seon Ahyun's ranking will go up.'

The next good thing to see is Big Sejin, and the rest of them did their parts well.

Surprisingly, Lee Sejin didn't look awkward because he used his facial expressions well.

When Choi Wongil appeared in the center of the chorus, the choreography made it seem like the cut went to Seon Ahyun, so it seemed like he had lost a bit.

And for me… fortunately, the bridge part came out well.

[Can't You feel me?]

This line was followed by two or three reactions that overlapped.

'…I think it's almost like a troll song?' (t/n: 돌림 노래 meaning troll/round. But the meaning is a method of singing, in which two or several teams sing a song repeatedly in the same order, with a certain time gap.)

I feel thankful, but at the same time, the intentions were questionable.

'Isn't it going to be a gimmick of a tactless talented person again?'

So when the trainers' dialogue was inserted in the bridge part reaction, I was suspicious and looked at the screen.

[Mudie: Was that Wongil's original part?]

[Jeok Taesong: Really?]

[Mudie: Yeah. Wongil said he couldn't do it, so (Moondae) gave his own chorus part and rearranged (by himself).]

But I didn't expect to save this story here.

In addition, when I heard the trainer's conversation, it sounded like I did a good thing and swapped parts with Choi Wongil.

Well, the result is correct.

Mudie even came out with an interview cut.

[Mudie: Moondae is surprisingly soft-hearted.]

[Mudie: But he has a strong voice!]

Thank you.

Even if the character is the same, “Tactless but a good kid” is better than “Tactless and crazy kid who makes me mad.”

If I could avoid the sudden death, I thought I should repay the kindness by sending red ginseng.

The stage ended with an enthusiastic response from the audience shouting for an encore.

[Encore! Encore!]

And the image of the team hugging and celebrating was also successfully aired.

“We were awesome.”

“Honestly, it’s my stage, but I liked it even when I saw it.”

“Agree.”

The conversation of happy former team members filled the living room with meaningless applause.

Since it was me, I only talked about my part, but in reality, the team members received the part relatively great.

Thanks to this, the living room atmosphere was still harmonious.

I don’t know, but I think there are a lot of participants there who feel like they are in a house of mourning.

For example, Ryu Chungwoo's team came out after us—was at the level of wanting to pay a silent tribute.

Here are some parts of the subtitles.

[Choose the best song selection?]

[Ho.we.ver]

[Team members who can't stay focused on practice.]

[Leader Ryu Chungwoo's struggle to fight alone]

The finishing touch was an interview with Ryu Chungwoo, who seemed to be having a hard time.

[Ryu Chungwoo:… I have to do it.]

'Wow, you sent it right.'

Even though I already knew it wasn't to that extent, it made me feel bad watching it.

The guys on our side saw it, and they talked so much and said everything that they ended up sounding like they were sympathizing without realizing it.

"Hey, what about them?"

"Chungwoo Hyung had a hard time. Huh. still…"

To summarize roughly, it was a picture of Ryu Chungwoo completing the stage and enduring it with the rest of the team, who didn't have any skills but were displeased.

"Chungwoo has a good personality, but… hey, he looks like a saint."

Gold 1's shaky self-talk accurately explained the editing composition accurately.

Anyway, the broadcast even showed that we easily beat Ryu Chungwoo's team.

[The score is… 82 vs 401!]

[Whoaaaa!]

It was a cut that was especially good.

Regarding individual voting, it was edited in a weird way that made Ryu Chungwoo cheer for his individual vote.

[Ryu Chungwoo: I think I still lack a lot.]

[Park Jeongseob: Honestly, shouldn't we win (individual votes)?]

[Lee Dojun: The person who led the team is responsible…]

Well, it was nice and clean that our team didn't even mention individual votes.

It was a complete victory for the team, both on the scene and in the broadcast.

When episode 3 was over, the entire team fell to the floor and sofa here and there.

"Wow… This is fast."

"I thought I was going to die of nervousness!"

"I, I was scared."

Even Seon Ahyun talked about it.

Everyone seemed to have used up a lot of their mental energy.

Keun Sejin lay down on the sofa and said.

"Ah, that's a strange thing to say— everyone worked really hard. Hey, watching the show, everyone was so good!"

"Keun Sejin, you did a great job too~."

"I'm glad it came out well."

Gold 2's eyes flashed with anticipation and left these words.

"Our reaction is really good, right?"

And as if someone had granted a wish, the word came true.

* * *

It was WeTube that the first reaction appeared as an indicator.

The stage video of 〈 October 31 〉 , the team that Park Moondae belonged to ranked 9th in the real-time popular videos.

The comments were crazy.

– From the arrangement to the stage's control, everything is amazing

– Such a precious stage in the shabby RII;;

– Everyone, this is the stock that will rise right away.

– What? Vampire? Just wait, I'll drive the blood donor car

– I've organized the names! 0:12 Seon Ahyun, 0:21 Lee Sejin (B)… (More)

– Octobers let's debut like this ㅠㅠ

– Looking at the preparation process, everyone was so pure and so cute ㅠㅠ. Is the stage and gap true story?

As soon as the broadcast was over, similar recommended or liked articles were posted one after the other or shared 10,000 times.

[Idol Inc.'s performance reinterpreted the debut song of a girl group.]

[Participant team who made art with MallangDalkom.]

[Idol Inc. episode 2, likely to change the ranking]

Even after coming into contact with <Idol Inc.> on this stage, the viewers slowly started to flow into it.

– I saw the vampire concept stage, is it Idol Inc.'s new season?

– I thought it would be ruined, but what happened to the stage quality?

– I've never liked idols, but how do I vote for this? ㅠㅠ

That's why I was able to see a strange article that said they liked this team by gathering it all together.

– It would be nice to debut like this!

– The kids are taking turns voting occasionally ㅠㅠ Ah, why aren't they in a group already!

Some KPOP reaction channels moved quickly as well.

It was a response that compared the stage of MallangDalkom's original song to the stage of October 31's arranged version.

[WOW! It's like, one of a kind, right?]

The video was re-uploaded on the reaction translation channel with subtitles, which keeps bringing in people from domestic and overseas.

In this process, the frequency of mentions of team members in related communities such as SNS has also increased overwhelmingly.

It was at the level of crustal movement.

The finishing touch was when MallangDalkom put a video of his reaction to this performance on WeTube.

[Idol Inc. topic stage! Did MallangDalkom watch it directly? October 31's 'To the New World' reaction video]

The members of MallangDalkom, whose heyday passed and their group activities ended, were continuing their lives in the position of SNS celebrities, except for one member who succeeded as an actor.

Two of them have a mutual understanding and have joined the trend by creating a WeTube channel.

And just in time, they didn't miss out on this hot content related to them.

So, except for one member who was busy with the actor's schedule, all of the members sat down and watched October 31's arrangement version.

"Whoa~"

"Ah, this is the difficult part."

"The person who sings Yueun's part, Seon Ahyun-ssi? Now it's my stock."

"Oh~ the main vocalist is our fan! Park… Moondae-nim!"

"Thank you~"

The reaction began with a formal exclamation, was followed by an appreciation for the details, and ended with praise for the participants.

"Ah! Dry flowers on the costume!"

"They put it in each flower that is our symbol. Wow…"

"They're very detailed."

Of course, everyone was shocked when the bridge came out.

"They raise the key like this?!"

"It's one key!?"

"Wow, that's so cool…"

“They must be our real fans.”

And the meeting ended with people crying.

“N, no, why are you crying? Why am I crying?”

“Ah~ They did so well, I think we were very moved.”

The members who were crying and fanning their hands slowly opened their mouths.

“Our… fun B-grade concept received more love than it deserved. But originally, the debut song was like this.”

After making their debut as a flower fairy, MallangDalkom made a comeback with the so-called ‘sick taste’ concept. (t/n: 병맛 means something like terrible.)

So there was a meme that became famous on the Internet at that time.

– A flower fairy with X flower on their head ㅋㅋ

It was the day they wore hairpins that symbolized their flowers on the 〈POP☆CON〉 stage.

Someone made that comment while comparing the captured photo with the photo from the first album stage.

“Actually, we… it’s true that we were loved more because people liked our debut song and the gap, but it’s still a little… It was too bad.”

They also had good feelings rather than bad memories about the terrible cutie concept that brought them back to their heyday.

But that didn’t mean they weren’t sad at all.

“We were able to come up with various concepts…”

There was no one who couldn’t be hurt by the constant ridicule.

So, they were deeply moved by the participants who took a serious approach to their debut song, which had not received much public attention.

“Thank you so much. MallangDalkom… Uhm, thank you for portraying the innocent concept nicely!”

“Yes. The reinterpretation is really nice. Vampire… If we get a chance too! I really want to try it.”

It was also impressive that they liked the stage, which had been reinterpreted in a great way without harming the feelings of the original song.

They ended the conversation with a slightly tearful voice.

“Really… It was a wonderful stage. We will all buy stocks!”

“October 31 fighting!!”

“Fighting~”

As the captured version of the video was uploaded to the community and SNS, the number of views of October 31’s stage video rose sharply once again.

And before 4th episode came out.

Individual fancam videos of all team battles were released first.

CHAPTER 24

It’s about time.

I turned off the comment window of October 31’s stage video that I had been watching.

First of all, the results after understanding the whole situation…

‘It’s going so well that it’s scary… ’

Indeed, there was no other way to express it.

From the number of views to the comments in the article, the numbers easily exceeded five or six times that of other teams aired in the third episode.

Ryu Chungwoo’s team had an increase in buzz in a different way, but it seemed they also gained some benefits from it.

Anyway, if there was no twist here, it seemed I could pass the second round smoothly

Therefore the next shoot was more important. Now that I realized the power of editing, I should be more careful.

Then let’s take a look at the things that will help with the next shoot.

I put a new search word in the search window.

[Park Moondae’s personal fan cam]

When I searched, the official video with the posting date ‘1 day ago’ appeared first.

I waited a day to watch it so that I could objectively look at the feedback.

Then. The number was more than expected.

[View count: 320,000]

Considering that dancing was not my strength but instead just an addition, it was higher than I expected.

I saw other participants in the recommended videos below.

“30,000, 120,000, 7,000, 20,000, 60,000… Hmm.”

Only a few of them had higher numbers than me. No, in the first place, most didn’t even exceed 50,000.

In terms of the number of views, I was probably within the top 12.

Considering that the stage had already been unveiled, it was a great achievement.

‘But substance is more important.’

I sorted the video comments in order of recommendation and went through them.

– Look at Park Moondae’s expression in all his parts, he’s born to be a genius idol ㅠㅠ

– I’m surprised that this kind of concept fits well

– Popcorn, chicken feet, and even horror. Is Park Moondae a god?

– Thank you for the bridge, I’ve lived a good life

– Moondae-ya is a fan of MallangDalkom, so when their song got picked he got excited all alone, that’s so cute!

The last comment is a bit… There seems to be a misunderstanding, but since it’s taken well, let’s just think of it as a compliment.

Other than that, most of them were compliments.

When sorted by the latest order, I could see abusive comments, but even those comments disappeared as if they were being swept away by the late comments.

This time, I searched my name on SNS. ‘Park Moondae’ and ‘Moondae’.

Posts with videos and images immediately filled the screen.

– Moondae is so cute (Personal fancam gif)

– How did you come up with horror there ㅠㅠ With his skill, talent, personality, and sense, our Moondae is a trinity idol ㅠㅠ

– Park Moondae is good at singing, but I don’t know if he’s that outstanding, though his face is my type. (Photo from the production presentation)

– Moondae Moon Puppy, eat well and please be nice ♡ (Photo of photoshopped Mukbang puppy)

I was a little embarrassed because it was overflowing with appreciation for all sorts of things.

Face, voice, facial expression, shoulders, eating behavior… There was even an article saying that they liked a cute habit of mine that I didn’t even know about.

I rubbed the back of my neck.

I was a little embarrassed, but… it didn’t feel bad. I was grateful and I felt strangely motivated.

Of course, this wouldn’t be the whole of Internet public opinion.

I was lost in thought.

Let’s see. If you transform ‘Moondae (문대)’ in a way it won’t be caught up in the search…

“Hmm.”

I put in a search word without much thought.

[Gommeo (곰머)]

It was a simple modification by turning 'Moon (문)' upside down and changing 'Dae (대)' into a similar notation.

Things like this were the standard while I was selling data, so my guess was probably right.

As expected, the results poured out.

– Gommeo is so damn ugly, can't even dance to Pop Con ㅅㅂ where is the editing ㅋㅋㅋ, I really hate it, diediedie

(TL note: ㅅㅂ is Korean slang for swearing.)

– Honestly, there's no good main vocalist in Idol Inc., so aren't you just pushing Gommeo with clenched teeth? The sound is too much;; typically fabricated innocence… Whew.

– It's obvious that Gommeo's concept is being a fan of MallangSweet~

– I want to see Gommeo's chest. He should expose it in the next stage.

-That ordinary Gommeo ㅋㅋㅋ? He must have washed dishes while in the trainee camp~ I can bet my account, he's so fake that I can't even look at him

There were a lot of malicious comments without filters.

Oh, even though I prepared my heart, it was still shocking.

There was something weird in the middle, but… It looked like sexual harassment, so I guessed they didn't want it to get caught up on the search.

Interestingly, quite a few of the accounts that posted the malicious comments chose Cha Eugene's photos as their profiles.

It was probably because he was the most popular participant, so it was set as a check, but some of them were probably real fans.

And it seemed to create a strange tension.

The atmosphere where the participants who performed together in the first team match were attacked by the participants of other teams.

It was not particularly surprising because it was a trend that was always observed in this type of audition program.

It was also something I experienced myself when I sold data.

They buy the data of the participant that they root for and want to discard the data of the participant they want to keep in check.

And speaking of it, it seemed that Cha Eugene and Park Moondae belonged to opposite camps.

"It's a side effect of the team's performance that went extremely well."

Anyway, I put up with it because it was bearable.

Rather, I had to see if there was anything to extract from the malicious comments.

'For now, there is no need to talk about the song.'

Since there was an objective stat for it, it could be verified as the broadcast progresses.

The next thing that comes up a lot is… My character.

The character concept was mainly meant to be contrived and unlucky, but those who criticized Park Moondae's appearance had reactions like 'that sort of concept with that face? ㅋㅋ'.

No, if my face doesn't work, I shouldn't have a concept character…

I'd never liked the editing direction, but now I felt a little bitter.

But I soon realized that it was an unnecessary feeling.

‘If it’s just the face. I can construct it.’

The next shooting would be the ranking announcement.

Compared to the upcoming fourth episode, the filming period was about a month away.

This meant that if my appearance changed even if just a little, it would be enough.

“Status window.”

I put my points into my visual stats without hesitation.

And after thinking for a while, I took out my smartphone, opened the group chat, and posted a message.

[Does anyone know a good salon?]

Since we’re doing it, let’s do it properly.

* * *

A few days before the 5th episode, the ranking announcement ceremony aired, there were all kinds of rumors in the related Internet communities claiming to be ranking spoilers.

[Saying a spoiler about the ranking]

: This is from a staff (Unclear photo of the set)

1st place Cha ○ gene

2nd place Ryu Chung ○

5th place Kim Rae ○

6th place, Seon ○ hyun

Child actor S ㅇin is out of the top 10 because, during the shooting, he has been dragging his feet and struggling while filming.

– It seems fabricated, but I wish Lee Sejin fall down sooner ㅋ how dare a useless child actor crawl into an idol survival show ㅎㅎ

└I got the pdf,

└Yes ㅋ just take it ㅋ

– As expected, Cha Eugene is in the first place.

– I'm jealous that Ryu Chungwoo gets to be in 2nd place thanks to editing.

└You bastards, don't pretend it's fabricated, it's disgusting

└There's a photo proof, isn't it real?

└It's an old photo. It's stolen from another behind-the-scenes picture that was uploaded last year.

└Omg…

In this way, the manipulation was discovered, and eventually, the text was deleted.

The production team tried to block the spoiler with all their might, and with half-luck, the effort was successful.

Thanks to this, right before the 5th episode of the ranking announcement ceremony began, viewers were sitting in front of the screen full of excitement.

Here, a woman sitting in front of her desktop felt the same way.

She prayed with her hands together.

'Please, Moondae's stocks… '

On the desktop's minimized tab, Park Moondae's fancam, which she took at the production presentation, was being uploaded.

Yes, she was the owner of the cannon camera which was hooked on Park Moondae while watching the first team match as a spectator.

She had completely become a fan of Park Moondae through PR broadcasts and the main program of the broadcasts.

She even settled down as a home master by posting the pictures she took.

(TL note: home master = refers to people carrying cameras and taking pictures and videos while following idols' schedules. Sometimes shortened as homma.)

And today is the day of the ranking announcement. She thought nervously.

'There's no way that Park Moondae would have fallen. However, once he gets a high rank here, his recognition as a top rank will definitely be solidified.'

It was the reality that the latecomers were beaten everywhere since it was difficult to climb through the concrete floor that had already hardened.

'So the first ranking ceremony is important.'

She thought as she wrote to her account via her smartphone with one hand.

FullMoon Baby

: I uploaded a fan cam of Park Moondae's production presentation. (WeTube Link)

#ParkMoondae #ParkMoondaeStockPurchase #IdolIncMoondae #MoonPuppy #Moondae

It was a post attached to the production presentation fancam that was uploaded just before.

As soon as it was uploaded, the number of shares increased steadily.

‘Good.’

She looked at the phenomenon with proud eyes and immediately added a promotional phrase.

– Please show a lot of support for Moondae! 😀 ♡ (Link to purchase stocks of Idol Inc.)

After posting, the last commercial slowly passed by.

The broadcast would start in five seconds.

She looked at the logo on the screen with her feet shaking.

[Re-listed! Idol Inc.]

Soon the screen changed, and a brief trailer was sent out to raise expectations.

[30th place contestant, 20th place contestant… Who is the 49th contestant who will make it to the last place?]

The images of several participants bowing their heads, biting their lips, and bursting into tears quickly passed by.

It was a stimulating edit that created a lot of tension, but she was not in the right mind to care.

Just now, Park Moondae’s cut was captured…

His hair, a new hairstyle with a soft perm…

“B, Blonde.”

She uttered the word blankly, and once again realized the meaning of the word, she covered her mouth with her hand.

‘Moondae is blonde!’

In reality, the hair color was was less extreme and closer to a golden brown, but it looked really good.

It fits him incredibly well and looks cute!

It was an idol's virtue to have dyed hair that fit well and Park Moondae had that virtue.

It was clear that God was pushing him to be an idol no matter what.

As she updated her SNS timeline with trembling hands, similar words were pouring out.

– Crazy

– Omg blonde

– Have I gone crazy

– Moon Puppy, you decided to kill me today… That's for sure…

– The puppy is perfect ㅠㅠㅠㅠ

– In fact, it is an established theory in the academic world that he'd been dying his blonde hair black until now. Anyway

Park Moondae's fans continued to pour out painful comments.

In fact, Park Moondae's cheerful investment in his visual stats played a big role in these impressions.

However, as everyone firmly believed that the change in hairstyle also brought about a change in appearance, it passed naturally.

Because that one cut came out so well, the binge-watching went on for quite some time.

[Production of PR shows]

When all the small behind-the-scenes productions were over, the PR broadcast preparation filming started just before the ranking announcement.

On the screen, the participants were shocked by the MC's announcement.

[For the next 15 minutes! Find the treasure ball!]

[What?!]

'I was a little curious about this.'

She came to her senses and refocused on the broadcast.

She thought it would be nice if it could shed a little light on how Moondae chose chicken feet.

[Yay!]

[Yeah! Gold!]

However, on the screen, it only showed the participants flocking around for a long time to find the balls.

'What? There's not enough footage of Moondae.'

Park Moondae's fans complained that the production team had no sense.

Even the viewers made unexpectedly similar remarks.

– The story of chicken feet doesn't come out until the end?

– It's like he just screwed up and made chicken feet

-ㅋㅋㅋ

But these reactions changed quickly.

It was because Park Moondae suddenly appeared in a quiet restaurant where there were no people.

-??

– Why is no one there

– Why is Park Moondae alone?

Park Moondae, who entered the restaurant, gestured behind his back.

Then a few heads crept out from behind the door.

[Lee Sejin (B): There's no one here, right?]

[Park Moondae: Yes. Let's go.]

[Ha Iljun: Okay!]

The viewers were more confused.

– What?

– How come they're the only ones there

– Do they have benefits?

Even the subtitles incited confusion.

[How can these people be here…?]

– No, that's what we want to ask ㅋㅋ

– Tell me!

The screen captures a brief glimpse of the three participants scouring the restaurant quickly and accurately.

And with a swish, the scene was rewinded.

[◀◀◀]

And click.

[AM 09:30 Treasure hunt begins]

The screen resumed as the participants ran out to find the treasure balls.

However, this time, it showed Park Moondae's movement.

[Going to the back door?]

Sejin Keun and Gold 1 unilaterally followed, but with the camera caught it from a distance, it looked very natural.

The three of them immediately started looking for the ball behind the back of the participants.

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋ That's

– That's awesome

– Wow. He came up with that in such a short time

– I think the idea is really good

– Park Moondae's personality is annoying, but let's admit it. He is talented. That's why it's even more annoying

ㄴㅋㅋㅋㅋ Correct

The three worked well together and when they heard the sound of other participants coming, they immediately shook them off and moved to another place.

The viewers were amazed, and Park Moondae's fans liked it more.

– As expected, our Moon Puppy is smart

– They all moved their body so they made steady progress. As expected of October

– But Moondae found so many balls so why is it frozen food ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

‘That’s it.’

Park Moondae’s home master clicked the heart on the most recent post and quickly concentrated on the broadcast again.

And she confirmed the scene.

The scene where Park Moondae, who smoothly collected the balls, received one bronze ball from Seon Ahyun and handed over all of his balls.

CHAPTER 25

Seon Ahyun accepted the balls from Park Moondae with a frozen face.

His interview was inserted shortly after.

[Seon Ahyun: A-Actually, I-I'm not good with instant food… I can't eat it.]

And like a flashback, a video taken with a fixed camera was briefly broadcasted.

The figure of Seon Ahyun, who had his head down on the bed because he was not feeling well, was faintly seen in the light of the thin bathroom.

[Park Moondae: Are you okay?]

[Seon Ahyun: I-I am okay…]

[Park Moondae: Wait a minute.]

Park Moondae went out of the dorm.

And after a while.

[Participant Park Moondae brought digestive medicine.]

He reappeared with subtitles.

In fact, this happened during the early evaluation.

At that time, Park Moondae was actively using the characteristic 'Sleeping is dying' so he wasn't sleepy at night and had relatively enough time.

Thanks to this, he could afford to respond to the voice of conscience in return for the chocolate that Seon Ahyun gave him.

For reference, Park Moondae had completely forgotten about this when preparing for the PR broadcast.

Seon Ahyun, who wasn't aware of that, said in an interview with an apologetic and grateful expression.

[Seon Ahyun: H-He might have been afraid that I wouldn't be able to eat them… so he changed it.]

[Seon Ahyun: T-Thank you, Moondae-ya.]

[Park Moondae: (Nodding his head)]

Of course, Park Moondae's cut was from an interview that had nothing to do with it.

But on the outside, it looked quite heartwarming.

– I never imagined this development

– What's this, chicken feet is actually good

– Is he actually shy?

– I'm starting to warm up to Moondae ㅋㅋ

The general audience was like this, so the fans added.

– Moondae is easy to misunderstand because he doesn't do any tricks, but in fact, he's the type to take care of those around him

– Our puppy… He's a real puppy

– Moondae, aigoo, you pushoverㅠㅠ you picked chicken feet well but why did you have to give him all of yoursㅠㅠ

– The flower crown was picked by Moondae

– Moon Puppy is so sweet

Park Moondae's home master was naturally happy with the favorable editing and response, but she was also a little anxious.

'What if they're selling out his personality?'

The personality appeal was perfect for a backlash.

This was especially the case towards the second half of the program.

They had to drag a participant down to make room for other participants.

Personality appeal could be destroyed just by a minor report of immoral behavior in school days.

And there were quite a few other participants who had already uploaded their graduation photos.

'Come to think of it, there's nothing known about Moondae.'

Is it because he's such a quiet student?

She imagined Park Moondae sitting on the pavilion on the top of a rice field, wearing a straw hat with an indifferent expression.

'It suits him…!'

It was originally common in the early days of becoming a fan to have symptoms where it felt like that person would make a good picture wherever you put them.

In the meantime, various participants were shown preparing for a PR live in the broadcast.

From Kim Raebin, who picked an electronic piano and made a theme song for Idol Inc., to Keun Sejin, who promoted a sneaker by performing an idol random play dance.

There were a lot of funny scenes.

Focusing on some of the top participants, it also briefly shed light on the situation of the participants who failed to bring a ball.

[If you don't have a collaboration item, then our program! Please promote <Idol Inc.>!]

Of course, most of them did not make it to the top 33 and barely managed to continue the broadcast for 10 minutes.

There was no way it would be fun to have a dozen people running the same boring content at the same time.

And it briefly shed light on the participants who promoted unusual collaboration items, and Park Moondae, of course, came out here.

The scene where Park Moondae set down the chicken feet and sat down was even perfectly subtitled.

[Park Moondae (Chicken feet lover) A.K.A Mukbang's New Star]

[Cha Yujin: It was really incredible.]

The reaction of Cha Eugene, who watched with his mouth wide open, passed briefly.

Her timeline was once again plastered with the word 'cute'. It also included her own writings.

– Mundae is so cute, breaking the chicken feet ㅠㅠ

The preparation process for the PR broadcast ended moderately warmly as if the live had ended well.

It passed as if the fact that some participants accidentally revealed other participants' secrets or talked about sensitive problems that occurred during filming never happened.

Even though two people voluntarily dropped out after being harassed on the Internet.

As long as the program was on the track for popularity, there was no need to unnecessarily reproduce the controversy of the participants on the main broadcast.

Because they had already guessed this would be the case, the majority of viewers were sarcastic and criticized it once or twice before focusing on what happened next.

It was the long-awaited announcement ceremony for each team's individual competition.

[Everyone! Do you remember the reward for the participant who won first place in the individual voting of the first team match?]

[Ah…]

[1st ranking announcement ceremony, these people passed!]

On the screen, several participants murmured, 'I wish it was me' could be seen.

And after the MC added unnecessary words with his flamboyant skill, he called the winner of each team.

Of course, the majority of participants tried to pretend to celebrate.

[Wow]

[Congratulations!]

In particular, Ryu Chungwoo's team members, who were controversial, tried not to look offended when Ryu Chungwoo was announced as number 1.

However, in the broadcast, it was aired in a strange atmosphere again.

[…]

[…Oh.]

[Congratulations!]

[Yes, thank you. You've been through a lot… Sorry.]

[…No. What.]

'It's such a shame that it's like that.'

Familiar with this pattern, she was rather antipathetic to the editing.

Perhaps regular viewers of survival show felt similar emotions.

Of course, the winner of first place in Park Moondae's team 'Oktober 31' was also announced.

[October 31's No.1 is… Congratulations! Participant Seon Ahyun!]

[…!]

The team members of October 31 who surrounded Seon Ahhyun were surprised.

[Oooh!!]

[I knew Ahyun could do it~]

[Congratulations!]

[Great job.]

[T-t-thank you…]

It was an appropriately harmonious show.

'Thank God!'

She was relieved but also felt a little sad.

'I thought Moondae could have won it.'

She knew that there was no real merit in receiving that, and she knew that it could get him attacked for no reason, but it was still disappointing.

A similar outlook came out of her SNS timeline.

– Congratulations, Ahyun~

– It's a bit disappointing, but I like Moondae's heartwarming response

– Blonde Moondae appeared for a long time! Ahhㅠㅠ I'm so happy

– Everyone did well, so it's not weird no matter who won itㅠㅠ

– Moon Puppy, you did a great job~

Maybe if she did a more blatant search… She could find this reaction quickly, too.

– The arrangement and the mental care were done by Moondae, but Seon Ahyun just ate them raw ㅋㅋ Ah, my love for humanity is shattered~

(TL note: eat raw = produce results without effort.)

Of course, there were some malicious individual fans.

Fortunately, thanks to Moondae's new visual as he gave congratulatory remarks on the screen, the topic quickly shifted.

She quickly captured and uploaded a close-up shot of Moondae.

– I don't know who did it but thank you so much for Moondae's blond hair… (Capture photo)

On the broadcast, the MC was saying something meaningful again.

[By the way, what would happen if a participant who was originally rejected passed?]

[Oh…!]

[Ah, no way]

[Everyone, the participant with the lowest score will be eliminated!]

For reference, she wasn't interested at all while watching.

'Please don't call Moondae quickly…!'

She was just nervous, hoping that Park Moondae would be called in the second half.

[Let me announce the 47th-place contestant.]

She was thinking of making a sales video for WeTube while the bottom ranks were passing by, but she couldn't get her mouse to work properly.

'Why am I so nervous…!'

When she finally couldn't stand it and brought her soda and sat down, the announcement finally entered the top 30.

After that, it cut up again in the middle and proceeded with the boring drink PPL content.

'Not even a single cut of Moondae came out…!'

This was because he hadn't touched the drink since he almost spit it out, but that was something that viewers couldn't have known.

It was only around the time of the announcement for the 31st place that an interesting scene finally came out.

[31st place is Kwon Heeseung!]

He was a participant on October 31 alongside Moondae who was referred to as Gold 2.

Among the people who came out to the podium to greet him, Park Moondae was one of them.

[Congratulations.]

It was very cute that he gave an awkward high-five with a serious expression.

Meanwhile, the MC made a joke that didn't even make sense.

[You're the first member of the October 31 team to advance to the next broadcast! Is that why the number is 31?]

[I think so!]

Starting with Kwon Heeseung, members of October 31 began to be called to the podium from time to time.

After Choi Wongil and Ha Iljun (Gold 1) were announced in the mid-20s, they weren't called for a while.

Then came 13th place.

[Congratulations. 13th place is… Participant Lee Sejin! Oh, there are two of them!]

Lee Sejin and Lee Sejin reflexively raised their heads, one smiled shyly and the other returned it with a firm expression.

[Among the two of them… It's Lee Sejin (B)! Also called Keun Sejin! He was the leader of October 31.]

[Ahaha!]

Keun Sejin smiled excitedly and gave a handshake to Lee Sejin who received it reluctantly.

After that, Keun Sejin went up on the podium with cheers from the participants who pretended to know him.

[Wow! 13! It's exactly like our team. It must be fate.]

Keun Sejin made a joke according to the situation.

He climbed up after neatly expressing words of encouragement and sincere gratitude.

Moondae is in the top 12!

She swallowed and waited for the next announcement.

Since Park Moondae didn't have a known presence before the first episode aired, this alone was a tremendous achievement.

[The participant ranked 11th… It's Seo Hyuncheol!]

And Moondae's name was not called until the 11th place.

It finally reached the number that could be counted with fingers.

10th, 9th……

[The participant in 8th place… Oh, it's the participant who performed MallangDalkom's song in the first team match.]

'Done…!'

She relaxed her shoulders and exhaled her breath.

He probably would call Moondae. She thought of it almost like it was a foregone conclusion.

First of all, child actor Lee Sejin had overwhelming recognition in the beginning, and Seon Ahyun had a very good index thanks to his last stage.

She thought those two would be called after Moondae.

[This participant showed unexpected charms…]

After taking turns illuminating the three remaining October 31 participants for quite some time, the MC continued.

[It's participant Lee Sejin!]

[…!]

Lee Sejin stood up with a stiff face.

Seon Ahyun and Park Moondae, who were still in their seats, gave congratulation as if out of habit.

[Congratulations.]

[C-Congratulations…]

[Thanks.]

Lee Sejin smiled faintly and gave an awkward greeting on the broadcast.

And she shouted with her voice.

“Ooooh!”

The responses on related communities were also exploding.

– What?

– Omg Lee Sejin

– I thought he would be in the top 5

– 8th place?

– Although there was a rumor about his personality, I thought he would maintain the rank by coming out as a hard worker

– It’s pretty close, how interesting;;

– It seems the other participants are pushed out of the rankings?

Lee Se-jin bowed his head and left the podium with a short and bold remark, ‘Thank you, I will do my best.’

She grabbed her mouse.

“Then what is Moondae’s rank?”

CHAPTER 26

[This participant has been noted for his outstanding dancing skills.]

'Moondae isn't in 7th place either!'

She clenched her hands and screamed wildly inside.

In the meantime, voting… No, it was worthwhile to persistently post videos and posts on SNS asking to buy stocks.

Then came up the 6th place, and 5th place.

[This participant… He's drawing attention with his unique ideas and talents.]

Finally, the MC called out Park Moondae.

[5th place, participant Park Moondae!]

The camera caught Park Moondae, who had been sitting down, standing up from his seat.

'Crazy, really crazy… '

She couldn't hold back the overflowing screams and wrote on SNS.

[Crazy Moondae 5th place ah Moondae-ya ㅠㅠ I knew you'd do well, our Moondae

Because you're a genius ㅠㅠ Thank you for being an idol, really ㅠㅠ]

And she deleted it without posting it.

She couldn't post it because her SNS, which had already become a well-known account, couldn't be used for frivolous reasons.

Park Moondae went up to the podium, his golden brown hair swayed as he bowed his head once, and then began to talk.

[I don't think I deserve this rank. I will show you my development so that I don't go against the expectations of the shareholders who bought my stocks. Thank you.]

And he bowed his head.

It was a standard speech, but perhaps because of the choice of words, it reminded her of a corporate fair rather than an idol.

As words like 'are you a CEO, Moon Puppy? ㅋㅋ' ran rampant on SNS, the MC asked a question that had been prepared beforehand.

[You got a lot of attention from promoting chicken feet. If you debut, what kind of mukbang would you want to do again?]

[Hmm… Steamed daechang?]

(TL note: daechang is cow's large intestine.)

The MC burst out laughing at the unusually specific product name.

[Is there a reason?]

[It's the second most delicious food after chicken feet.]

There was laughter here and there at Park Moondae's calm answer.

The MC wrapped it up on a humorous note.

[Ah, PPL-related products again! The participant who cares about Idol Inc.~ The 5th place! Participant Park Moondae!]

[Thank you.]

Park Moondae just smiled faintly and bowed his head again.

And he moved up to the seat that matched his rank.

The editing was moderately sensible and didn't leave any room for controversy.

While watching, she breathed a sigh of relief.

She was worried because there had been subtle editing that gave strange tension to Park Moondae's attitude every time.

'You must be biting on another participant.'

Unsurprisingly, Kim Raebin, who was announced in 4th place, received an uncomfortable edit.

The conflict between the 7th ranked participant and the team battle was highlighted, so this seemed to be the aftermath of that.

Anyway, she watched the rest of the announcement with a more relaxed mind.

In fact, it didn't really matter who it was.

'Now that it's like this, I wish Seon Ahyun is safe. Oh, and I wish Cha Eugene would fall a little.'

Cha Eugene's malicious fans were calling Moondae names and posting bullshit on SNS. It made her so angry she wanted to sue them.

However, <Idol Inc.> usually picked participants who had left their agency, so it had traditionally been difficult to calm public opinion through accusations to the agency.

'Even Moondae is just an ordinary citizen… '

She was just worried that he might have been hurt while searching.

'Once he debuts, I'll send pdfs to his agency as soon as possible.'

She made a firm decision and continued watching the broadcast.

Seon Ahyun was in 3rd place.

“T-th… Thank you. Huu.”

Seon Ahyun burst into tears and said thanks.

The tearful reaction cuts of several team members of October 31 were captured together along with a touching BGM.

“T-that I c-can do it…, I-I didn’t think of that. It-it’s all… It’s all thanks to the team. That, and those who v-voted… Thank you for that.”

The MC mouthed, ‘It’s not a vote, it’s a stock!’

However, the cross-editing of Seon Ahyun, who couldn’t see it because he was too hectic, brought a small smile to the viewers.

Seon Ahyun sniffled and went to his seat, and in the process, the warm interaction of October 31 team members, including Park Moondae, was briefly highlighted.

It was proof that the production crew was also conscious of the hot reaction on the Internet.

After that, Cha Eugene and Ryu Chungwoo were nominated for 1st and 2nd places just as everyone expected, and after the competition, Cha Eugene was announced as 1st place.

“Great!”

‘Ryu Chungwoo would’ve been better!’

Cha Eugene, who gave a bright and cheerful acceptance speech, seemed a bit cheeky.

However, she was not stupid enough to write malicious comments, so she decided to just be happy with Park Moondae’s fifth place.

The participant who received less attention was announced in 49th place, and the ranking announcement ceremony ended blandly.

Park Moondae's portion was also over after the heartwarming scene where members of October 31 gathered and laughed at Seon Ahyun.

'It's too bad.'

For fans like her, there wasn't enough content. She wanted to see more.

Next time, she hoped that she would be able to take pictures on her way to work, and she wished for Park Moondae to be safe.

After the ranking announcement ceremony was over, filming for the next team match probably continued.

'Isn't he going to be on the same team with Keun Sejin or Seon Ahyun again?'

She speculated and wished deeply.

'Whoever it is, I hope Moondae can make a great stage comfortably!'

* * *

I feel like something is going to break.

What is this situation?

"Ah! He has picked participant Park Moondae!"

The MC's excited voice and the participants' surprised exclamations rang everywhere.

"Oh my!"

"Moondae hyung?"

Even though the number was reduced from 77 to 49, it was still the size that made my ear ache.

Are you surprised? I am surprised, too.

Why did he pick me?

“Like this, participant Park Moondae… You will be joining Kim Raebin’s team.”

Filming the second team match right after the ranking announcement ceremony was a routine I had expected.

– The team… will be chosen by drawing lots!

– The 7 participants I pick will become the leaders, and they will take the quiz to select team members!

I knew this rule would come out at least once.

But I didn’t know he’d pick me.

Kim Raebin.

He was a participant from the same agency as Cha Eugene and was currently ranked 4th. As far as I remembered, he was ranked 2nd in the final.

By the way, he never even said hello to me.

“Then, participant Park Moondae, please move!”

I trudged along and stood next to Kim Raebin.

‘I can’t ask why you picked me out of the blue.’

I don’t know what kind of editing I will receive if I do. First, let’s nod at each other as if we’re business partners.

“Nice to meet you.”

“Yes, I look forward to your kind cooperation.”

Fortunately, unlike his fierce impression, he greeted me well.

'I guess he didn't have bad intentions.'

I guess I had some prejudice because he gave the image of a handsome bully that teenagers seemed to prefer these days.

'So you really picked Park Moondae because he seemed useful.'

Kim Raebin was a participant focusing on rapping, so it wasn't strange if he didn't pay attention to the main vocal position.

In the first place, If I was chosen by a low-ranking participant I would have guessed I was chosen as the main vocalist.

But obviously… In Kim Raebin's last team, there was a participant who was originally going to debut in the main vocal position.

And yet you skipped him?

'Oh, you're uncomfortable with the last team.'

Now that I thought about it, it was better to skip them.

That's because the atmosphere in Kim Raebin's former team was shattered because of the individual reward for first place.

Well, I remember the last episode.

– Didn't you give me this part on purpose?

– No. It's so everyone can perform their best on the stage……

– So you thought I could only do this much.

It didn't appear on the show, but after the individual voting reward was announced, I heard that there was a guy who grabbed him by the collar.

'That brutality was shown very well on the broadcast.'

Thanks to this, Cha Eugene was the only one who survived the broadcast with good editing.

The team's main vocalist didn't have a lot of footage, but it wasn't strange if they cut off each other due to the awkwardness.

And out of the remaining vocals, it would make sense if you chose Park Moondae, the most verified vocalist.

'But it's a bit weird that you chose me first.'

It's nothing to worry about right now, so I let it be.

I quickly organized my thoughts and grasped the situation.

"Next quiz~ Five words that start with 'Park (박)'."

"Museum (박물관), applause (박수), bat (박쥐), Park Hyukgeose(박혁거세), park goji (박고지)."

Kim Raebin immediately raised his hand and answered correctly. His momentum was staggering.

"Wow! Participant Kim Raebin, you got it right twice in a row!"

"Aaahh!"

"Isn't this too advantageous for rappers?"

With the rich reactions of the participants who grasped the broadcasting system, Kim Raebin immediately pointed out the next participant.

"Cha Eugene… I'll pick this participant."

Even if he was on the previous team, he was in first place. I would have done the same.

He was surprisingly wise.

Looking at the last team match, it seemed that he had worse social skills than Lee Sejin, but was it just the power of rumors and editing?

However, I didn't know what effect it would have on me if the team was formed like this.

'I think it's going to be very different from the first round.'

"Good choice!"

"Yes."

Cha Eugene ran quickly as soon as he was picked and pretended to know Kim Raebin.

And then he raised his thumb at me.

"We are together!"

"Yes… That's right."

"You're good on stage!"

"Yes. I look forward to your kind cooperation."

I don't know how long I have to talk like this. It's awkward.

The funny thing is, I was the only one who felt awkward. Cha Eugene was nodding his head at the context that he alone understood.

I could already predict our future communication.

In the meantime, Kim Raebin was relentlessly recruiting teammates. His batting average was quite good, so he quickly filled the team.

"Participant Ryu Chungwoo."

"Participant Min Jeonghoon."

And I was starting to feel uncomfortable.

The lineup was too good. Here, 'good' meant that their ranking was high.

All the team members were in the top 15. Just thinking about what kind of editing would come out was already confusing.

'Isn't that mean you wouldn't know unless you're really that good?'

Even worse, I was the only one who felt that the picture got a little weird.

This is because Choi Wongil was among the first 7 people to choose participants to join.

"Seon Ahyun!"

"Keun Sejin, ah, Lee Sejin hyung!"

Starting with Seon Ahyun, Choi Wongil almost restored all of his teammates from the first team match.

Of course, I was excluded. Raebin picked me first, so there was no choice.

'Well, I don't think he would have picked me even if there was room.'

However, there was one more person from October 31 who Kim Raebin picked first.

"Lee Sejin, a former child actor, participant Lee Sejin (A)! You will join Kim Raebin's team~"

Lee Sejin walked to this side with a complexion that didn't look so good.

This meant that the ticking time bomb that didn't explode thanks to the crazy social skill of Keun Sejin, Gold 1, and Gold 2 in the first round was now joining Kim Raebin's team.

Why did he pick Lee Sejin?

Did he pick him because he had the highest rank among the remaining people?

After looking at the remaining members who had not yet been selected, I turned my head and saw Choi Wongil's team.

"Moondae~"

When our eyes met, Keun Sejin and Gold 1, and Gold 2 held out their hands with sad expressions as if they were doing some kind of skit.

And Seon Ahyun, who looked embarrassed, waved his hand nervously.

This… What is this ominous feeling of being on the wrong end of the rope?

A chill ran down my spine. I think this is the moment when I need some supernatural help.

'Status window.'

CHAPTER 27

I brought out the achievement pop-up that I had turned off.

[Calling for fame!]

50,000 people remembered your existence!

: Draw Rare Characteristic 👈 Click!

It appeared after the first episode aired, so it was a pop-up from a few weeks ago.

'I unintentionally left it.'

In fact, not long after the third episode aired, I achieved the achievement of 100,000 people and it gave me points as a reward.

So here's my current status window.

[Name: Park Moondae (Ryu Gunwoo)]

Level: 12

Title: None

Vocal: A

Dance: C+

Visual: B+

Talent: C

Characteristic: Infinite potential, I heard it's true (C), Look at me! (D)

!Status abnormality: Debut or die

Remaining points: 1

For reference, the practice points obtained during the team match were already distributed one by one for vocal and dance stats before the team stage.

Ah, taking a look at the visual stat, wouldn't it be a waste to turn my visual into an A stat? There was only one point left.

Of course, it would be a waste.

'However… Unlike other stats, if my visual changes rapidly, I will be suspected of using plastic surgery rather than natural growth.'

This was especially true if the level of the alphabet was changed.

In the beginning, I upgraded it from C+ to B-, it could be excused that I started managing my visuals while preparing for the broadcast. But there was no excuse if I raised from B- to A- right away.

Raising B+ from B- was barely possible due to the long-month break and hairstyle change.

'Well… I am thinking of strengthening my puppy image too, so this is fine.'

Looking at the search rankings, among dog breeds, golden retrievers seemed to be the trend these days, so it would be better if I could give people that impression.

Well, the chatter got long. Let's go ahead and pick out characteristics from the pop-up.

'I hope something useful comes out.'

In the new pop-up, the familiar roulette machine spun and stopped. It was a brass box.

Once again, I didn't catch the silver box which appeared to be high-grade. Just as I was about to think it was such a pity, I saw the name of the characteristic.

[Characteristics: 'Look at me! (D)' Acquired!]

People pay a little more attention to your actions.

'…?'

Why is it this one again?

The pop-up did not stop there, a new phrase appeared.

[Checking the duplicate characteristics!]

Do you want to synthesize 'Look at me (D)'?

This… Isn't this 'Strengthening the duplicate items' which is common in mass-produced trash games?

I couldn't figure out where this system came from.

'Once I debut and avoid sudden death… I'll have to look into it.'

Anyway, there was no other choice, so I synthesized it.

[Successfully synthesized!]

Acquired 'I want to be the center (C)'!

People pay a lot of attention to your actions

– When activated, 'Talent' stat rises by one level

The name was terrible, but the content was impressive.

If it could increase my Talent stat, I welcomed it. This characteristic used to be like a chicken rib, but now it was revived.

(TL note: chicken rib = something that doesn't really give value or benefit, but you can't easily throw it away.)

It felt like that.

But it was the ‘Talent’ stat. What a mysterious increase in ability.

To put it bluntly, it was the ability to stand out in front of the camera, and to put it simply… Um, it was equal to the quality of a star.

Just in time, there was the participant with the highest Talent stat next to me.

“Like this! The team has been decided~”

“Uwaa!”

I heard the MC’s remark signaling that the recruitment of team members was over.

I also responded with moderate applause and secretly checked Cha Eugene’s status window.

[Name: Cha Eugene]

Vocal: C+ (B+)

Rap: B

Dance: A+ (S+)

Visual: A (S)

Talent: A+ (EX)

Characteristics: Black hole (A)

It was a terrifying window status even when I looked at it again.

The three consecutive A stats made me think this kind of guy was meant to be an idol.

In particular, Cha Eugene had the highest stats and potential among the participants.

It was higher than Youngrin, one of the judges, which meant that it was higher than most official idols.

And now, one of the lowest stats in my status window was 'Talent' that I had just managed to fix.

It would be nice if I could get a hint during this team match as to which one of the two, Dance or Talent, that I should upgrade first.

"Everyone, please say hello to your team members first! As soon as the greeting is over, I will introduce the second team match!"

For now, the question was whether or not the team match would end well.

I thought silently as I looked around at the faces of the team members who quietly gathered according to the MC's words.

'Let's not get involved no matter what kind of mess that might happen.'

* * *

"Oh, I look forward to your kind cooperation."

Ryu Chungwoo, who suppressed the strange power struggle of other participants and became the leader, greeted the team members with a smile.

Everyone clapped their hands, but I felt the tension underneath it.

'This… I think it'll get caught even if it doesn't get edited.'

The production team was amazing at catching this kind of restraint.

"Have you guys greeted each other?"

"Yes!"

“Oh, it’s good to look heart-warming~ Then, shall we announce the second team assignment?”

“Uwoooh!”

Even when the participants shouted at the words of the MC, the participants of this team had a relatively respectful attitude.

‘It’s like the feeling of losing your body when you’re in the same group with other students in liberal arts.’

Anyway, it’s not a problem that I can solve, so let’s just focus on what the MC says.

“For the second team match, there’s content that has been consistently done in <Idol Inc.>~ Do you know what it is? Oh! That’s right. It’s the <Rediscovery of Hidden Masterpieces> project!”

They’re doing it again this season.

“On the website… They voted out of 50 songs, right?”

“Yes.”

There were murmurs around. Whether the participants actually knew or not, they all gave conventional reactions.

“Masterpieces that unfortunately didn’t shine for many reasons! This is a project that <Idol Inc.> will reinterpret and present in front of the public once again, and this year too, our shareholders have selected several idol masterpieces!”

To put it bluntly, it wasn’t successful but the song was okay, so they wanted us to remake it and use it as our own song.

‘The composition fee will be fixed so there is no creative economy.’

As I was admiring the production crew’s amazing cost-cutting ability, someone suddenly talked to me from the side.

Surprisingly, it was Lee Sejin.

"…Is there any song you want to sing?"

"What?"

He looked regretful for speaking up, but a question was still a question, so I answered it anyway.

"I hope it's an addictive song."

It meant that even though the song must have been low-profile, I didn't want to do a song that wouldn't do well.

"What about you?"

"I… I want to do <Base>"

It was a good choice. <Base> was the title song of a popular idol when they were still unknown, just like the debut song from the last team match.

I had actually seen the stage, and I remembered that the concept was strong and the melody was addictive.

"That's a good song. I think it'll be good to make it into a stage."

"…Yes."

Lee Sejin nodded in affirmation.

Just I wondered if he was finally starting to take care of his social skills, Cha Eugene suddenly intervened in the conversation.

"I like that song, too. *'Base~ Uh, the ringing heartbeat~'*"

"…Ah, yes."

Lee Sejin closed his mouth with an uncomfortable expression.

'This guy is like this all the time.'

If this is how it's going to be, I want to ask why you come out here in the first place.

Anyway, a camera was here so it would be better not to leave it alone. Let's just sort it out.

"I see. I hope we can do it this time."

"Yes!"

Cha Eugene happily affirmed, not a single thought behind those eyes.

'He doesn't have any sense or context, but he's a positive guy.'

As they evaluated in their own ways, the MC finally announced the selection method.

"There are seven things on the table that you can see in front of you!"

Certainly, a table was seen quite far from the participants.

"These are belongings of the original singers of each different 'Hidden Masterpieces'~ You can use your reasoning and intuition to pick one of these items! You can choose."

"Ugh."

"Ah~ I'm not good at this!"

"The method is- Oh, it's traditional. It's running! Leaders, please get ready!"

"Running?"

Ryu Chungwoo, who was good at sports, was the leader, so this situation was favorable.

Of course, it would be effective only if we could match the song selection by looking at the original songwriter's stuff.

However, such an approach was possible.

“That pouch! I think it’s a girl!”

“Baseball… Are they a fan of baseball?”

“Oh, it’s a skull pencil. They’re somewhat unique?”

There were loud murmurs here and there. Everyone seemed to be thinking in their own way.

Oh, this team reached an agreement in a flash.

“I’d like you to bring the item that looks the most expensive when viewed from a close distance.”

“Um, yes!”

It looked like his reasoning was that someone who put expensive things here had a high probability of being a successful entertainer, it sounded plausible enough.

Perhaps it was a judgment that considered not only the song selection but also the amount of broadcasting footage.

At Kim Raebin’s words, Ryu Chungwoo nodded and agreed.

Soon after, the MC called the leaders again.

“Now, leaders. Are you ready?”

“Yes!”

“Well, here we go!”

The leaders ran recklessly and flew their hands over the table.

‘No matter how you look at it, it doesn’t look like you can afford to choose anything from there.’

Then isn't this song selection just about luck?

"All right, I got it!"

However, Ryu Chungwoo snatched something and returned with a smile.

And he held out the object with a confident face.

It was a baseball.

"This is a ball signed by Ryu Wanbeom!"

"Wow."

Everyone opened their eyes wide with a surprised look. Ryu Wanbeom was a famous hitter who made it to the Major League.

Cha Eugene immediately asked.

"How do you know?"

"I also watch baseball. So I found out right away."

Ryu Chungwoo smiled then threw and caught the baseball. The atmosphere in which things were going well temporarily relieved the tension within the team and created a comfortable atmosphere.

But it didn't last long.

"The owner of the baseball… Oh, it's Lee Chanwoo, the vocalist of the idol band 'Sun Island'!"

The owner of the baseball is… A stranger that no one knows.

"Who is that?"

No one in the team gave an answer to Cha Eugene's question.

"Wow!"

Right next to us, Choi Wongil's team was excited and making a fuss.

"Hello. I am Jung Haim and I am a movie actor."

"Ooooh."

The owner of the pouch chosen by the team's leader, Keun Sejin, was a famous female actor.

Perhaps because of the first team match, there was a strange sense of deja vu.

I shrugged my shoulders.

'Well, this kind of thing can happen.'

The most important thing is music anyway.

Of course, having a famous celebrity appeared would be advantageous in securing the amount of footage.

In addition, it would also be advantageous in blocking reactions such as *'You are taking away precious songs from poor unknown idols.'*

But in the end, it was overwhelmingly beneficial to have a good song. In an audition program, the stage had to be good.

So if you check the song…

"The song I will entrust to you… It is <Burning Like the Sun>!"

Oh.

Oh… This… What should I do?

"Ah!"

"I know that one!"

The other team members exclaimed.

“I am glad that you know this song…”

“Sunbaenim, I’m listening well!”

The team was overflowing with relief.

It seemed they had regained vitality because it was recognized and known as a good song.

The original singer also seemed excited and eagerly introduced the song.

“<Burning Like the Sun> was released seven years ago, but it is still loved as a cheering song. I’m sure those who like baseball have heard the chorus.”

“Oh, I know. It’s a great song.”

When Ryu Chungwoo answered softly, the original singer smiled happily. Cha Eugene opened his eyes wide and asked questions.

“How’s the chorus? I don’t know much about baseball!”

The original singer cleared his throat as if he had been waiting for that question.

“Ah, ehem. *‘Now, wake up ~ Like that burning sun ~’* This one.”

“Aha. That’s right.”

“Ha ha!”

The team members laughed harmoniously at Cha Eugene’s sloppy grammar.

It looked good to create a warm atmosphere with the original songwriter compared to before.

The problem was… The outlook was not good.

After this cut, I think they will probably put in subtitles that say ‘2 days later’ and show the team’s atmosphere as a preview.

Because that song is not suitable for idol survival at all…

CHAPTER 28

I'll be honest with you.

If someone asks me whether <Burning Like the Sun> is a good song, I could say that it is.

However, if they ask me whether it's a good song for an idol performance, I would tell them to quickly give up on the idea.

Because this song has the lyrics and sound of a typical 2000s rock band…

Trust me. I listened to this song whenever I went to shoot idols throwing the first pitch.

It's just an upbeat band song that doesn't even fit the cheerleaders' choreography. The coolness of the high-pitched sound is also an advantage.

In conclusion, the difficulty of arranging it is ridiculously high.

Can't I pick a characteristic related to composing? I need it right now.

Regardless of my feelings that went unanswered, the conversation between the original singer and the participants was hopeful.

The other team members only knew one or two lines of the song's addictive chorus.

"We haven't been active for a long time, so we couldn't sing this song that much. I hope you guys do a great job this time."

"We'll do our best to make a great performance!"

How?

…No, let's stop being stressed out over unnecessary things, If I don't get hit by the editing in this team match, I can think of it as a save.

Even if it goes like this, I can make a quick debut by catching a small and medium-sized agency.

'Still, the stage… I thought I'd be able to pull it off to some degree.'

I was strangely disappointed. I didn't know why I was so concerned about the stage when I didn't start this out of my own will in the first place.

'I have nothing to say if someone teases me for being too immersed.'

…But, it's fun.

All right, let's talk a little bit more carefully when discussing. Maybe another participant will come up with a good idea.

The original singer soon left the set. A few days later, he said he would watch our practice with the trainer during the mid-term evaluation.

And as the team members sat around, the story of the stage composition finally came out.

* * *

First of all, Ryu Chungwoo came up with a standard answer for the concept.

"Wouldn't it be best to go with a cheering squad concept? I think it'll go well with the song, and it's good to add a difficult choreography."

"Cheering squad? Hmm… Experience is a good thing."

"I think it's okay."

"It will be fun."

Several people, including Cha Eugene, responded positively. The response was okay.

“What do you think? Raebin, Moondae, Sejin.”

Ryu Chungwoo quickly scanned the reactions of the team members and took notes of the three silent participants. Including me.

Rather than saying it now, It would work better if I said this after taking a look at the situation.

So let’s naturally look in the direction where the other two are sitting.

“Shall we hear Sejin’s opinion first?”

“…I think the cheering squad concept looks tacky.”

You’re hitting us with facts.

So far, there had been no malicious edits, so Lee Sejin’s uncooperative attitude had rarely been highlighted on TV.

Just by looking at a glimpse of it while searching for Park Moondae, Lee Sejin’s fans believed him to be a ‘sensitive and shy hard worker.’

However, since Ryu Chungwoo was edited well, Lee Sejin might be crushed by editing this time.

In any case, Ryu Chungwoo was not very agitated. He just asked back calmly.

“Do you have any other suggestions?”

“Because I don’t have any… I wasn’t going to tell you.”

“Hmm, all right. I got it.”

Ryu Chungwoo immediately asked Kim Raebin again.

“What do you think, Raebin?”

“I’m not familiar with this song, so I think I should listen to it first.”

“Okay. Let’s play it for now.”

When the smart pad provided to us was activated, a chorus melody played with an electric guitar came out, starting with the classical drum intro.

After everyone listened to the song with their mouths closed, Kim Raebin muttered first with a pale face.

“This is…”

Finally, there’s someone else who noticed this disastrous selected song.

First of all, the lyrics were a youthful love hymn that was popular in our childhood. In a good way, it was retro, and in a bad way, it was old-fashioned.

Naturally, there was no characteristic concept like a flower fairy or a vampire, and it was difficult to attach one to the song.

And since it was built on the basis of a good singer standing alone, the chorus octave was high enough to tear the throat.

What if I adjust the octave? The charm of the song would disappear.

This is because the song’s appeal was the exhilaration of the high notes that pierce the vocal cords.

“Hmm, the note is very high. Do you find any other difficulties?”

Kim Raebin inhaled as if he were going to pour out words, then he glanced at the camera and closed his mouth.

It seemed he was paying attention because he was beaten up over a personality controversy in the last team match that aired.

“So… Yes. The song is good, but I think it’s hard to arrange it.”

“Really? If you say that, it must be really difficult.”

Ryu Chungwoo readily agreed. It seemed that even though Kim Raebin's broadcast was ruined in the first team match, he had taked the lead in the arrangement and selected the right song.

'He changed a mass-produced EDM song from the late 2000s to a well-loved EDM trap, leaving only the sample bits.'

"Then what about Moondae?"

Finally, it's my turn.

"I think we should decide on something before arranging it."

"Like what?"

"Part distribution."

You can't see the answer in the selected song? Then we shouldn't be focusing on this.

We have to focus on somewhere that doesn't fail.

I assure you, I'm the only one in the team who can sing the chorus of this song properly right now.

To digest this right away, you'll need an A stat vocal or higher, and I am the only one who has that on this team.

'But I can't sing the entire chorus by myself.'

So I had to start by cutting the parts and practicing so that my voice wouldn't crack right away.

As for the arrangement, it doesn't seem like a reward will come out no matter what we bring in, so let's put it off for a while.

This is not the time to look at the big picture. It's a state of emergency.

If you convey this explanation as mildly as possible, it will be like this.

“It’s a difficult song to sing, so I think we should practice first.”

“Part distribution… Of course, it’s important.”

Ryu Chungwoo looked surprised.

“But that’s unexpected. In your last team match, I heard that you decided to arrange the song first.”

“Yes?”

It wasn’t even shown on the broadcast, I didn’t know how he knew that.

“Oh, I heard it from Keun Sejin.”

‘When did he talk to Ryu Chungwoo?’

That guy is not ordinary, either.

“Raebin-ah, I’m asking because you’re the best at arranging the song. What do you think about Moondae’s opinion?”

“…Yes, that’s fine. As we practice, we have a lot of options… Let’s think about it.”

Kim Raebin readily agreed. Although he looked like he was observing a meteorite that would fall on Earth tomorrow.

“Well, then, I’ve heard all your opinions, so until we come up with a better idea, let’s raise our hands.”

Ryu Chungwoo didn’t waste time and immediately organized the situation.

“First of all, raise your hand if you agree to proceed with the practice with the concept of a cheering squad.”

The majority raised their hands. I obeyed for once.

Ryu Chungwoo didn’t pay extra attention to Lee Sejin, who didn’t raise his hand, and immediately moved on to the next agenda.

“Then, raise your hand if you don’t mind distributing parts first.”

Fortunately, this gained a majority vote too. Seeing that Lee Sejin raised his hand, I guess my explanation made sense.

Just before our eyes met, Lee Sejin quickly lowered his hand and averted his eyes.

Do you want to show that you agreed with the opinion but not with me? Why?

“Okay, then let’s divide the parts first.”

The part distribution progressed step by step and soon faced an expected difficulty.

“I don’t think I can do it here.”

“Oh, me too…”

“This is too high.”

The high-pitched melody in the chorus appeared four times and occupied about half of the song.

However, except for Park Moondae, all the team members either failed or grabbed the back of their necks and became embarrassed.

A member of the team, who had very good singing skills with a B+ vocal, was anxious about his voice cracking, and eventually gave his opinion about ‘that’.

“I think it would be better to arrange it and lower the key before doing it. Since we have two rappers, why don’t we add some rapping?”

In other words, let’s arrange the song first. Damn it.

“Lowering the key…”

Kim Rae-bin’s expression darkened. The bad impression got worse.

But the tide had already turned.

“I think it’s right to lower it.”

“I agree.”

“Hmm, first of all, the team members should be able to digest it. Why don’t we lower the key and rearrange it to match that?”

Kim Raebin glanced around and eventually nodded.

“Yes… Then I’ll try.”

It seemed he was afraid that If he said he wouldn’t do it here, he would lose it all and get crushed by the editing again.

In the end, the arrangement was carried out, reflecting all the inconsistent opinions about ‘lowering the key,’ ‘adding a rap part,’ and ‘accompaniment suitable for the cheering squad concept’.

I guess those guys want to appear smooth with their loud voices when in reality, they’re failing.

The stage is already ruined.

I didn’t bother to object to the whole process. No matter what I said, I was outnumbered anyway.

Even if I was lucky enough to trigger <I heard it’s true>, without a proper alternative, I would only seem like a dissatisfied person.

In addition, I had no answers if a talk like, ‘You can sing it, so why not sing it as it is?’ began to come out.

I would be in trouble if I looked selfish and appeared on the show as a person with no social skills.

So, I needed an outsider to tell us frankly that this was terribly horrendous.

‘In the end, staying still and doing nothing is the answer.’

The midterm evaluation, which only judged the first verse, was three days later, and if the judges had ears, at least one of them would tell how bad it was.

Until then, I'll have to think of an alternative.

"Let's make the choreography now!"

However, the choreography Cha Yujin made that day along with that shout, was the move from <It's me> with sudden extreme difficulty.

Thanks to this, I had to resist the urge to put the remaining stat points into the dance, regardless of the alternative.

As my stamina slowly melted, three days passed.

And, finally, we've entered the midterm evaluation.

* * *

"This team's ranking is so fancy~"

"Raebin has sharpened his knife!"

"Everyone had good results at the ranking ceremony."

The judges talked about our rankings first.

The production team might have told them to mention it in advance, but it was the truth anyways, so it would serve as a way to set up expectations.

"Oh, the demo song is already out?"

"Yes!"

It was thanks to Kim Raebin's direct conversation with the arranger.

"It's great~"

“Right. This team is the only one! Instead of the original song, they’ve already made their own arrangement.”

“As expected of the team made up of talented people!”

The judges were already satisfied.

But.

“Hm…”

After the stage, the reaction was lukewarm.

The judges, who were shrugging their shoulders and exchanging eyes, eventually grabbed the microphones one by one.

“Actually, your stage itself doesn’t feel that bad, right? But it is not attractive.”

“That’s right. You made the choreography well, too. I can see your wit. Um, the cheering squad concept… I think it’s supposed to go well with the song, but why does it feel so gloomy?”

“It’s a shame that the rap feels come out of nowhere. You touched the original song a lot, but it feels worse than the original song.”

As the reviews piled up, the problems began to materialize.

Finally, judge Youngrin asked as soon as she grabbed the microphone.

“Who rearranged it?”

I didn’t look at Raebin on purpose. Because instead of him, it was the people who brought it up who were the problem.

But when I looked around, everyone else was looking at Kim Raebin, so it didn’t mean much.

“We all discussed it together.”

Ryu Chungwoo quickly grasped the situation and turned it into a team responsibility. He also tried to neutralize the situation by saying he misled the team as the leader.

That's a good decision.

But there are trolls everywhere.

"Yes, and… Raebin did the arrangement."

You're going to cut your tail off like this?

'Are you crazy?'

You're doing this something stupid like this when the camera is on?

Looking at his embarrassed face, it seemed he was afraid of being criticized so he reflexively named someone else.

*'Fu*k… '*

If something went wrong, it would be edited out as bullying.

I also opened my mouth just in case they treated it like a wholesale price.

(TL note: wholesale price = a metaphor for a situation where several people in the same group are treated the same despite their differences.)

CHAPTER 29

The judges looked like they were about to say something along the lines of,'Then are you guys saying that Raebin did everything wrong?'

So, I had to choose my words well.

'I have to make it sound like I am listing facts, not trying to fix the situation.'

"Yes, Raebin… Since he could make an arrangement, we consulted with the arranger, and we all decided on the direction of the arrangement."

Kim Raebin flinched.

'He can't open his mouth.'

Fortunately, Ryu Chungwoo came right in.

"That's right. We'll talk about the problem you mentioned and solve it. Therefore, on the day of the team match, we'll make sure to show you the best performance."

We saved it.

Ryu Chungwoo and I didn't add anything else.

The judges looked thoughtful, but they soon nodded.

'They probably thought that the opportunity to reprimand us already passed.'

It was a relief.

"Then you'll have to start rearranging it again, but you'll be far behind the other teams. Can you do it?"

"We'll do it. We can do it, right?"

“Yes!”

“We can do it!”

If only it wasn’t for the guy who threw his senses to the trash can and brought us all the way here, hopefully, he wouldn’t miss the answer again.

Fortunately, this time, the troll also came to his senses and answered vigorously.

Judge Youngrin nodded.

“Okay, but you have to know that it can be a reckless challenge in this time constraint, the consequences are yours to bear.”

“That’s right. There’s no guarantee that changing it will make it better than it is now.”

But if the stage wasn’t good because we didn’t change it, there would be a reaction like, ‘Why didn’t you change it even after getting feedback?’

And since it would include something like ‘you have no challenge spirit’, it was meaningless.

In the end, whatever we do, the process is edited and evaluated according to the results.

All the participants knew this implicitly, so there was a sense of discipline and tension in the team.

“Yes, we’ll keep that in mind.”

The moment Ryu Chungwoo’s answer seemed to end the situation, a voice interrupted.

“May I say something?”

It was the original singer with a microphone.

“Oh, yes… Go ahead.”

With a slight reluctance, the judges answered the original singer who suddenly stepped in, and the original singer lifted the microphone with deep eyes.

“On your stage… I couldn’t feel the power of < Burning Like the Sun>.”

“…?”

What are you saying out of the blue when everyone’s already done talking?

The original singer continued to talk over the people who were subtly bewildered.

“This song needs to inspire courage and passion in people’s hearts, right? But just because you guys are handsome and good at dancing doesn’t mean you can properly deliver that message.”

“…”

Ah, yes…

“When we were promoting, we really wanted to give off that feeling. You shouldn’t forget the respect for this kind of song just because you’re a little famous now.”

Aren’t you ashamed to say things like that to audition participants who haven’t even made their debut yet?

It seemed he mistook old-fashioned remarks as advice for kids. His ego also seemed bloated.

However, it was painful that we had to pay attention since our reactions would go into editing as well.

I still have to squeeze out an alternative arrangement, do I have to take that nonsense into account?

It was annoying, but if we refuted it, only the image of taking a song away from a ‘poor unknown idol original singer’ would come out, so everyone answered meekly.

"Yes!"

"We'll keep that in mind."

Well… Social life is like that.

* * *

After all the other teams finished their midterm evaluation, the rearrangement discussion finally began.

The troll hesitated and spoke to Kim Raebin.

"Hey, I'm sorry…"

Is it okay to let him apologize in front of the camera?

Well, since the team setup was already covered, it was up to him to fix his mistake.

Kim Raebin was silent for a moment but he soon nodded.

"No, it's fine. It's true that I was in charge of the arrangement."

In fact, it wouldn't be strange if he answered, *'No, fu*k you, you're the one who told me to do it'.*

Anyway, Ryu Chungwoo patted both of them on the back and ended the conversation.

"Great job, guys. Let's talk about the arrangement again as soon as we're ready."

For reference, 'ready' here is referring to the camera setting of the production team.

"Yes!"

During the interlude, the participants dispersed briefly in determination.

Their expressions weren't very good because the midterm evaluation was close, but perhaps because it was settled at the end, they still had some hope.

'But hope is useful only if we can come up with an alternative.'

Looking at the situation, no one had come up with the arrangement direction, and it seemed they just expected something to come out.

It meant that they wanted to turn it into a happy situation without having to do anything.

'The future isn't very bright.'

"Hey, Park Moondae hyung."

"Oh, yes."

As I sat in the corner and tried to think alone, Kim Raebin spoke to me.

'It's unexpected.'

He hadn't talked much to me in the last three days.

…No, come to think of it, he rarely talked to anyone for the past three days in the first place.

I practiced so hard that I couldn't afford to chat.

Anyway, Kim Rae-bin knelt next to me and said solemnly.

"…Thank you."

"No, what?"

He was probably thanking me for cutting off the troll's words earlier.

"It was the first time someone else helped me in such a situation…"

I see, I understand the situation roughly.

Kim Raebin was also worried.

If we fought because he couldn't adapt to the team again, he was afraid that the public opinion of him wouldn't be recovered.

'No wonder you're keeping a low profile.'

Sure enough, he slowly told his long story.

"I was worried that I would be criticized for lacking teamwork again after the first round, but thanks to Park Moondae hyung, I overcame the crisis. As expected, it was a wise choice to recruit someone with good teamwork first."

"…?"

Is it because of 'teamwork' that Park Moondae was picked first?

When I asked that question, he nodded.

"Yes, I saw you treat your team members reasonably. Of course, your singing skills were also great."

"…Uh, yes. Thank you."

He was very unique in the aspect that he believed the contents of the broadcast even after being crushed by editing on the said broadcast.

I can't believe you trust Park Moondae's teamwork ability even though I was edited as unsocial in the beginning…

It was really amazing. I would have understood it better if he had picked Keun Sejin.

'Ah, you didn't pick him because his role as leader overlapped with Ryu Chungwoo.'

I guess you have a standard.

As I was confused, Kim Raebin spoke again.

“Oh, hyung. I don’t mind if you speak comfortably.”

“…Um, yes.”

Well, it doesn’t hurt to talk to a high-ranked guy.

After I answered meekly, I realized that I had a question to ask in the current situation.

“By the way, do you have any idea about the arrangement?”

“…Actually, it’s a little difficult.”

Kim Rae-bin’s impression of a popular bully softened a bit, and his expression turned gloomy.

“Even if I start rearranging again, it’s a matter of which part and how much I should fix.”

So basically he didn’t know how many touches he had to do in order to meet the deadline, because he already practiced everything.

“I don’t think we should fix it too much… I don’t know what to do because there’s no unity in the corrections we have right now.”

“That’s true.”

So he meant he didn’t have any particular ideas and couldn’t decide what to fix.

It was the same as me.

Kim Raebin muttered his worries as if he couldn’t stop once he started.

“We should also reflect the original singer’s advice, but I’m not sure what it means specifically to ‘insert courage and passion.’”

“…Yeah.”

That’s… really true.

It was hardly an advice.

'How can idols inspire courage and passion when they're not some sort of American superhero from the 1980s?'

"…?"

Wait. Just now… I think I realized something.

I recalled my previous thought and realized that I had caught a strange idea.

But the more I thought about it, the more the idea… fitted perfectly with the situation.

A concept idea that can be arranged so that it can be digested even if the original key is used as it is.

We didn't have to change the choreography of the cheering squad concept that we'd already practiced, and we could even catch the concept of 'courage' and 'passion.'

It might be a wonderful solution. But the problem is…

'…It's too much.'

That's right. Not only it was excessive, but it could also become childish. Then I couldn't just fix it. It was clear that even if only one person made a mistake on the stage, it would be ruined.

Huh?

"…No."

"Yes, hyung?"

"Wait a minute."

I ignored Kim Raebin's retort for now.

Instead, I shouted to myself as I saw the team members slowly returning after the break time.

'Status window!'

And I quickly swept through the status of my teammates.

"…!"

I didn't know about the other stats, but all of their 'Talent' stats were above B-.

For reference, having the B stat meant that they could go for the main position with that level.

Indeed, it was a team made up of only high-ranking people.

'This… Seems like this is going to work?'

No wonder the judges didn't really care about the out-of-season cheering squad concept.

"Raebin. This arrangement."

"Y-yes?"

I spat out the idea I had to Kim Raebin who seemed a bit bewildered.

"Yes…?"

Kim Raebin seemed perplexed at first. However, as I added more explanation, he became calmer, and soon his eyes began to shine.

(TL note: the eyes are described with 삼백안 which means a type of eyes that shows the white beneath the pupils. It doesn't translate well to English so I left it out.)

The response was better than expected.

"W-wait a minute."

Kim Raebin ran to the keyboard installed on one side of the practice room and began to tap something out.

And I thought of Kim Raebin's status window that I saw earlier.

[Characteristics: Maestro (A)]

: What you need is just a small opportunity.

When inspired, creative speed +120%

Just like Seon Ahyeon, there was also a separate golden spoon in his status window.

'The ability to copy other people's characteristics… Is there none? It comes out often in web novels.'

I wanted to lament, but I had to do what I had to do. I quickly called the status window.

And I invested the remaining points in the 'Talent' stat.

With this, my stat also entered B-.

'All right, I match their figures.'

"Moondae, why did Raebin go to the keyboard all of a sudden?"

Ryu Chungwoo approached, unable to speak to Kim Rae-bin who was pounding the keyboard, and spoke to Park Moondae.

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I came up with a concept idea, and I guess he likes it."

"What's your idea?"

"Transformation Hero."

Behind the confused Ryu Chungwoo, Cha Eugene whispered to the person next to him.

“What is a transformation water tongue?”

(TL note: Here, Cha Eugene heard it wrong. What Park Moondae said = 히어로물 (hiromuri). What he heard = 혀로물 (hyoromuri).)

There were five days left until the day of the ccompetition.

* * *

And five days later, on the day of the competition.

It was crowded in front of the stage set building where the second team match of <Idol Inc.> would be held.

The number of audiences hadn’t increased much. It was only thanks to the soaring ratings and the increasing popularity index that there were more people wandering around and trying to listen to our voices.

It was terribly unsettling that some people were already giving out slogans and photo cards even though it was not the last broadcast.

‘Wow, it’s no joke.’

A woman stood in the line, avoiding the crowd with a sullen gesture.

At the request of a friend, both of them had applied to be part of the audience, however, she was the only one who managed to get in, so she finally canceled her class thinking ‘Shouldn’t I just go?’.

‘Because it’s so famous these days.’

Of course, this choice was greatly influenced by the request of the friend who appealed with tears and food, saying, *‘Please, tell me how’s Moondae doing.’*

Still, in the back of her mind, she had this thought.

‘Is it that good…?’

She had also seen a picture of Park Moondae with golden brown hair on SNS.

He was quite attractive, but she thought he wasn’t handsome enough for her to like him.

Still, she entered the building, thinking that since she got treated to a meal, she should keep an eye on him.

She never imagined a future where she would beg her friend for a picture of Park Moondae after the audience was over.

Author's Thoughts

I change Seon Ahyun's name to Seon Ahyeon. I am sorry for the constant inconsistencies but bear with me please o(*￣▽￣*)o

CHAPTER 30

The woman who came to the audience at the request of her friend managed to sit in the middle seat with a good view.

'I feel a little awkward.'

When the woman who had never seen such a spectacle alone felt embarrassed, the person sitting next to her spoke up.

"Who are you here to see?"

"What? Uh… Park Moondae?"

"Ah… yes."

The person next to her, who was holding the slogan <Kim Raebin Debut> in one hand, looked up and down at her, and then quickly turned her head away while looking at her smartphone.

She felt strangely bad.

Feeling like coming here was a waste of time and emotions, the woman began to watch the first stage in a sullen mood.

"The first stage is… It's <Fingerprint> from 'Rolling Couple'!"

Along with the MC's loud introduction, the stage of 'Rolling Couple', a mixed-gender idol group who failed after two activities, was briefly shown on screen.

It was shown under the pretext of 'consideration for the audience who wasn't familiar with the song because it was a hidden masterpiece' and 'respect for the original singer.'

However, in fact, it was intended to contrast the old idol's tacky stage with the current participants' stage.

“And the participants who reinterpreted this stage… They are Ha Iljun, Ji Taewoo, Lee Sejin, Seon Ahyeon, Choi Nahoon, Seok Heekang, and Choi Wongil~ Team ‘Gigantic’! Please come in!”

The stage screen showing the original song suddenly turned off, and the profile photos of the participants filled the screen one by one according to the MC’s call.

Then the screen gradually turned off, and the stage was illuminated.

– *Feel it when you put your hands together~*

Keun Sejin’s smiling face filled the screen.

Tta-tta-tta-

And with the fast beat of the electro-house accompaniment, a splendid group dance unfolded on the stage.

‘Wow… ’

Unlike seeing it on the screen, it felt more powerful in the field because the sense of space in the choreography was alive.

It even felt a little shocking for the woman who was directly watching an idol performance for the first time.

‘Should I have gone to a dance singer concert instead of a ballad singer?’

She unintentionally regretted it and enjoyed watching the stage in front of her, immersing herself in it.

“Thank you!”

So by the time she applauded the participants who left after the stage was over, she was completely excited.

‘This is actually kind of fun?’

It was boring to wait for the preparation in the middle of the stage, but watching the stage while the broadcasting equipment was running tasted different.

It was regrettable that the team's skills fluctuated depending on the participants.

'This team is a bit… Yeah.'

The second team was disappointing, and the third and fourth teams were quite fun.

Since the woman had never done the so-called 'fangirling', she forgot about it and only a lumpy feeling remained rather than a detailed appreciation of each stage.

First of all, the first team did the best so far, that was the impression left in her head.

'I was told to vote for the two best teams on the way out, right?'

Saving a spot for the first team, she continued watching the stages.

The next teams also had their own concepts and were fun, but none of them left an impression as big as the first team.

'Um, I'm a little tired.'

In fact, the teams in the second half were not inferior to the first half.

Looking at songs she didn't know well one after another, the freshness she felt in the beginning disappeared and she started to get bored.

Moreover, the participant requested by her friend to watch had not yet appeared.

'Isn't it the last team now?'

Resisting the urge to turn on her smartphone, she barely listened to the introduction of the next team.

"This performance is… It's <Burning Like the Sun> by the band 'Sun Island'!"

And a video that looked like a music show from about 10 years ago appeared on the screen.

'Oh, this song.'

This was the cheering song she heard at the baseball stadium she went to with a friend who liked baseball.

'It was originally sung like this… '

Well, it wasn't as exciting as it was at a baseball stadium. She just thought it was a difficult song with a lot of high notes.

She sang the passionate vocals on the screen without much excitement and was startled by the MC's roaring voice.

"And the participants who reinterpreted the stage! Ryu Chungwoo, Lee Sejin, Kim Yujun, Park Moondae, Yoo Jiho, Kim Rae-bin, and Cha Eugene!"

'He just said Park Moondae, right?'

She hurriedly looked back at the screen. Profile pictures of the participants appeared on the screen.

'Oh, I know them.'

It was the last team because it had a lot of famous participants.

She repositioned herself with her anticipation rising again. The cheers that were several times bigger than before pierced her ears.

'Oh my gosh, they're really popular.'

"That's right, the 'Hero' team! Coming in now-"

Before she could think the name was tacky, the stage went dark.

It was a dark stage with no screen lights.

The moment a ray of blue spotlight hit it.

A participant holding his index finger up to the sky like a gun was revealed.

A tall black jumpsuit with a racing suit-like pattern absorbed the intense blue lights.

In that hand, a red finger suit glistened in the light.

And she heard a low voice.

-Yah, yah-" Hero Time

[HERO TIME!]

In an instant, the same letters filled the screen.

Screech!

The intense bass began to tear the speakers apart with a blatant glitch sound.

All the lights on the stage came back as if they were exploding. And the seven people began moving in unison.

"…!"

As their outstretched limbs hit the floor and their bodies were bent, an elaborate group dance like a sword unfolded.

They were all dressed in black jumpsuits with different patterns.

Cha Eugene, located in the middle, started singing.

My heart is burning

as bright as the sun

A participant who stood up from behind took over and sang.

– It reaches far and high up in the sky

So that I can fly further and catch you

In the accompaniment where the typical band sound should flow, there was a heavy and intense dubstep sound, leaving only a rocking feeling.

WOB- WOB- WOB- WEEEB-I

BRMMMM-!

And the group danced again.

Participants who reached out with one hand moved as if they were doing martial arts.

She looked at the stage with her mouth open. The more intense movement caught her attention.

The choreography consisted only of large and solid movements without any small movements.

The composition, which might seem monotonous and excessive, just became powerful thanks to the change of movement in the blink of an eye.

-There's one thing that saves the world

A burning passion

Ryu Chungwoo, wearing a navy headband, sang the pre-chorus.

The moment she thought there was a strange and wonderful choreography that seemed to shoot at something, the chorus burst out.

Fly away! Until the end~

Until the day that shines like the sun!

The hair color of the participant, who sprinted forward and stretched a high-pitched tone, was shiny blonde.

A bright yellow glossy choker matched as if it had been made from his own hair.

With that high note, the participant was grinning.

'Crazy.'

Is that Park Moondae? The woman reflexively covered her mouth.

'Y-You're so bad at taking pictures…!'

He looked nothing like the picture her friend showed her!

That's not how you take a picture of someone who's good and cute!!

Beating low expectations had tremendous destructive power.

In addition, there was no business that could win over preference.

'I had similar tastes with her…!'

As she was getting a new realization, the stage entered a new phase.

Kim Raebin entered the seat where Park Moondae had sat down.

Goggles with purple lenses shook near his collarbone.

-Rising like a star

Shining like the sun

'Huh?'

The high note of the chorus continued in the original song, but for this part, rap came out instead.

However, the remaining chorus melody didn't disappear.

Instead, it was treated as a synthesizer like a sampler, adding a lively sound to the hip dubstep accompaniment.

When the rap was put on top of it, the momentum of the high notes did not die off. Rather, it felt easier to listen to.

Besides, the lyrics in that part were old, so the rap lyrics translated directly into English made the song more modern.

– *It's flying away! Right now~*

It's burning like the sun, time!

-Take your wings

And fly up

Let's catch up

To the moon!

'Wow… '

The woman who was not familiar with the original song only felt the impression that 'this one is better', but she certainly heard that the arrangement was much better than the other teams.

And most of all, the stage was just cool.

By the time the final chorus came out, she was leaning toward the stage, almost bewitched.

– *Fly away! Until the end~*

This time, Park Moondae and Kim Raebin sang the chorus as if they were exchanging at the end of the formation.

The choreography that moved as if it were a single body looked like a wave.

Under the blue-purple laser light, the black jumpsuit doubled the feeling of a sci-fi comic character.

And the last chorus with the super high note.

– *I'll save your world!*

"Oooh."

She swallowed a groan that was about to come out of her voice.

Park Moondae, who raised his head in the white pointing lighting, seemed to be able to save the world any time.

No, it was clear that he was saving the world…!

On the stage, Cha Yu-jin came out with the last dance break and back tumbling.

The body cut through the air and landed on the stage floor like a sequence in an action movie.

Thud.

It was a very symbolic, superhero landing.

Over the remaining accompaniment of the top line, narration like a glitchy announcement flowed out.

– *Thank you for flying Hero Air today…*

The boys on the stage slowly turned back.

And as they all raised a thumb-up together, the song ended.

Only then she realized that the surroundings were filled with tremendous noise.

"Aaaaah!!"

"Uwaaaah!!!"

All the cheers and screams that she unconsciously ignored while focusing on the stage rang in her ears.

What was even more surprising was that she was also screaming.

“It’s crazy!! Crazy!!”

The person sitting next to her was screaming as if she was about to jump out of her seat.

The slogan in her hand was already crumpled and shaken recklessly, so she wasn’t able to fulfill her original role at all.

In her head, images of Park Moondae smiling, Park Moondae pushing the high note all the way, and Park Moondae turning his back were playing endlessly.

At the same time, in order not to miss a single shot of Park Moondae leaving in front of her eyes, she thought with her eyes wide open.

‘Vote!! I have to vote!’

And above all, she was sure of one thing.

‘First place no matter what! Definitely the first place!’

This team is the winner!

* * *

After the stage was over, the ranking announcement began immediately in front of the empty audience seats where the audience had left.

With participants lined up in front of each team, the MC announced the next ranking.

“Third place… ‘Hero’ team, which reinterpreted <Burning Like the Sun>!”

“What?”

“Hey, that’s ridiculous.”

As soon as the MC’s presentation was over, the place was filled with murmurs from all directions.

I looked at the screen with cold eyes.

‘I knew this would happen.’

CHAPTER 31

“Wow, they got 3rd place?”

“No, weren’t they doing a great job?”

“In the first place, their ranking was the highest…”

“The reaction was crazy, too.”

When we got third place, the other team participants around us talked about it.

Thank you, but in fact, I had predicted this situation since the moment they said each audience had two votes.

‘The vote is to put us in check.’

If they came to the audience, it meant that most of them were heavy viewers who were pushing for certain participants.

The audience first chose the team that had their favorite participant.

And then they would have voted for the team with ‘low rank and good skill’.

There was no way they would vote for this team who could end up as competitors for the participants they pushed for.

If you think about it that way, honestly, getting 3rd place was a good save.

Because it meant that in addition to the audition who came to watch this team, we were able to gain the votes of the people who just came to watch.

However, the team members seemed to be quite shocked.

“…Thank you!”

Ryu Chungwoo, who answered a beat late, bowed vigorously.

The team members tried hard to copy his move, but it was clear that they were trying to look calm.

“Thank you.”

I bowed my head, too.

The announcement of the first and second places was also postponed to the ranking announcement ceremony. Among them, there was the ‘similar to the first match’ team collected by Choi Wongil.

“Then, shareholders! <Re-listed! Idol Inc.> We’ll see you again at the ranking announcement ceremony with the announcement of the 1st place in the team match!”

After the MC’s closing remarks, Choi Wongil seemed to glance at this side with a triumphant look.

‘Are you an idiot… ’

He’s always like that.

Is it because he hasn’t seen the spicy taste of editing yet?

Anyway, this team was too out of mind to notice that. One by one, Ryu Chungwoo patted the shoulders of the team members who were applauding in a depressed state.

“Great job. It must have been cool because we did our best. Don’t worry.”

“Yes…”

“Yes, we did a good job!”

Well, as Cha Eugene said, we certainly did well on stage.

So if we got a sympathy vote for this, we wouldn’t be criticized.

In any case, no one in this team would be eliminated from the next ranking announcement, which was the best result.

The problem was the editing, but unless there was another editing where they only highlighted Ryu Chungwoo and blackened everyone else, it would be fine. Since the performance came out well.

Everyone already had a fandom, so any bad news would be wiped out in public opinion battles.

Kim Raebin, who was ruined in the first team match broadcast, but settled in the rankings through persistent public opinion battles by fans, was an example.

Ah, he's talking to me.

"That… Park Moondae hyung."

"Yeah, what is it?"

Kim Raebin nodded.

"Thank you very much for everything. Can we exchange contact information?"

"Yes."

I gave my number without hesitation.

There was no harm in having a close relationship with this participant. Thanks to the songwriting characteristic, he ate the arrangement raw.

In addition, looking at his personality, unlike Keun Sejin who kept in touch all the time, he seemed the type who finished his business quickly on the phone when needed.

Kim Raebin bowed his head again after receiving my number.

"I'll say hello from time to time."

"…Good."

I don't know if I'm talking to an aspiring idol or to my successor.

'Oh, come to think of it… '

Is this an opportunity to change the so-called 'group of tied participants'?

Since this team match was also successful, there was a possibility that the fandom would be reorganized on its own if a few eyewitness accounts were leaked in time for the next episode to air.

'Park Moondae' and the guys tied up at the beginning had a lot of risk factors from drugs to the final rankings in the future. Furthermore…

'If possible, wouldn't my survival rate be higher if I am tied to someone with a higher final rank?'

I couldn't ignore the possibility of having a less hostile reputation to people who pushed Cha Eugene if I were tied up with Kim Rae-bin.

'Great.'

To make such a calculation, reality hit me hard, but who cares about that when faced with sudden death?

"Thank you for your hard work~"

"Thank you for your hard work!"

As I was packing my things and getting ready to leave while occasionally shaking my head, someone touched my back from behind.

"H-hey."

"Hmm?"

When I turned my head, Seon Ahyeon looked grim.

The guy who has been too busy for the past weeks to say hello suddenly comes to talk with a determined face?

‘Is there a bad rumor going around?’

Seon Ahyeon looked around and after confirming that no one was looking, he opened his eyes wide and whispered.

“Choi-Choi Wongil, you know.”

“…? Yeah, what about Choi Wongil?”

Why are you suddenly talking about Choi Wongil?

‘Did you come here to curse because he said he wanted other parts again?’

Surprisingly, the idea that I just threw was half right.

“He-he-he is so mean…!”

Seon Ahyeon was almost huffing.

No, what kind of personality does he have to make this guy so angry?

“Why, what happened?”

“Y-yes!”

Seon Ahyeon nodded vigorously and carefully began to explain what had happened in the last team match.

“A-at first… W-when asking for his part.”

Oh, my prediction was completely correct.

“H-He kept talking about you! Like s-sarcastically……”

To summarize the following explanation of Choi Wongil’s deeds, it was roughly like this.

‘I didn’t get camera footage in the first round, so it’s right for me to get some this time. I made the team, so shouldn’t you be grateful?’

'You gave all the parts to Moondae hyung, but why are you not giving all the parts to me when I am the main vocalist? It seems you're discriminating against me because of your friendship.'

It seemed he even talked about the latter while crying in an interview with the production team.

'He must have learned from the last team match that the first punch wins.'

It was said that when the team members who were hit in the back of their heads were struggling, Keun Sejin gently calmed Choi Wongil and cleared the situation.

'It's a wise choice considering the broadcast.'

But thanks to that, the frustration of the team members who couldn't speak properly seemed to have disappeared.

Seon Ahyeon's cautious attitude had changed to a completely turbulent state by the end of the speech.

It seemed he was so angry that he started stuttering.

"Y-you have to be careful…! I-I'm afraid he'll make your story weird… I-I wanted to let you know."

Seon Ahyeon, whose cheeks turned red, was worried about Park Moondae while everything was happening, and eventually acted on his concerns.

Perhaps the main point was this.

The situation is funny, but… Yes.

'I'm kind of grateful.'

In this survival audition where everyone was busy taking care of themselves, he treated me like a real friend, not a connection.

I feel like I'm a jerk who divides kids into groups based on their rankings.

'It's not like I'm in a middle school class.'

My future knowledge was already being ripped apart since my team had already lost ground in the first team match, maybe I was being paranoid.

I replied with a smirk.

"Yeah, okay. Thank you."

"N-no…"

Sun Ahyeon was surprised then hurriedly waved his hands and returned to his usual timid appearance.

Keun Sejin, who appeared after breaking through the gap, put his arms around our shoulders.

He seemed to have a strange ability to join any conversation.

"Hey, guys. What are you doing?"

"T-that… I was telling him."

"What? Ah… him."

Keun Sejin shrugged.

It seemed Cheo Wongil had been trolling so much to the point that he was referred to by his pronoun instead of his name.

"Can't we do it next time?~ The stressed side loses. Look at this. The world is too busy to see good things."

"W-what?"

Keun Sejin naturally passed on the topic, then popped something on the screen of his smartphone and turned it towards Seon Ahyeon.

It was an SNS post that posted pictures of subway station billboards.

Oh, it's already time for this.

Placing s on public facilities was one of the idol fans' representative support. I remembered because I took a few pictures of them.

'Of course, it was uploaded under a fan account name.'

Anyway, I thought Keun Sejin was trying to show his own billboard, but it wasn't just that.

"Ta-da! This is the three of us."

"Hm?"

Looking at it again, it was definitely a picture of three nearby billboards facing each other.

Under the picture, I could see a registered post.

[It's at Hongik University Station, it's the same age line from October 31! So cute ㅠㅠ I put a post-it on it!]

Keun Sejin grinned and said.

"Hey, isn't it amazing? How did they put up ads like this? Did they discuss it beforehand?"

No, they must have fought for a spot.

I felt sorry when I thought about the time and money they must have spent to catch a large billboard at a popular station.

'Well, Park Moondae's chances of survival… Thank you for your investment in it.'

I had a new concern. Even if I debuted and avoided sudden death, I would avoid going to hell only if I filled the contract with sincerity.

As I was confused by a strange sense of debt, Keun Sejin got down to business.

“Do you want to go see this? Fans also posted messages, so it’s only right to go there and see them~”

Can’t we just each take care ourselves?

However, Seon Ahyeon’s eyes shone and he shouted okay right away.

“O-okay.”

“Good, good. Moondae, you’re going too right? When should we see it?”

Somehow, just like back when we watched the third episode together, it was a foregone conclusion that we would go together like this.

Still… As Keun Sejin said, I had to go see the billboard once. If people recognized me, it would be easier to deal with it together rather than alone.

I looked at the two of them alternately for a moment, then just nodded.

“If we’re going, it’d better go within this week.”

“The sooner the better!”

“O-okay!”

Listening to the two happy people excitedly setting the date, I continued packing my luggage.

Well, it doesn’t feel bad.

* * *

And two days later.

I took out the black cotton mask I bought at the convenience store last time and put it on.

The destination was Hongik University Station.

When it wasn't filming time, I was stuck at home, so it had been a long time since I had gone out.

[Seon Ahyeon: Why don't we have lunch after looking at the billboard? I've found some good restaurants, but if it's okay with you… (View more)]

A message came from Seon Ahyeon.

'It's still a long sentence.'

Checking out Keun Sejin's response which was filled with excessive emoticons, I went out and got on the bus.

I stayed in a cheap apartment, so there was no subway station within a 20-minute walk distance.

'Like this, I can move quietly to the bus stop near Hongik University Station.'

…is what I thought, but I was mistaken.

"Gasp."

"Isn't that Park Moondae?"

"Oh my God… Hey, hey there!"

Because as soon as I got off the bus and crossed the crosswalk, this happened

I hadn't arrived at the meeting place yet, but people were already gathering.

There were only a few people who recognized me right away, but it was a busy road so the crowd was gathering.

"Who is it?"

"Is it a celebrity or an idol?"

'I can't do this.'

I thought about it, bowed my head to say hello, and ran.

I wanted to respond more, but the atmosphere was unusual. The impact of the most successful audition program at this time was amazing.

This was the time when there was at least one news related to rankings of <Idol Inc.> if you turned on the entertainment news section. I was complacent because I didn't go outside.

'Now that this happened, I have to quickly look at the billboard and disappear.'

As I was quickly running down the subway station, my smartphone vibrated, but I thought to check it out after leaving the crowd.

And… As soon as I arrived at the location of the three billboards, I figured out what the call was about.

It was because the two people who had already arrived at the billboard were surrounded by smartphones.

'I guess it was a call saying that they've already arrived and that the situation is like this.'

These idiots came out without masks.

Meanwhile, people who recognized Park Moondae cheered.

"Moondae!"

"Moondae is here!"

I am embarrassed but thank you. Really.

CHAPTER 32

'First, let's quickly finish what I have to do.'

First of all, I caught Seon Ahyeon who struggled with people's questions and requests around the billboard.

"Give me your phone."

"H-huh?"

"I'm going to take a proof shot."

Seon Ahyeon finally came to his senses and sneaked to the front of the billboard. I turned on the camera of the smartphone that was handed to me.

People reacted immediately.

"Oh, picture!"

"Let's get out of the way~"

"Let's take a picture of them!"

Surprisingly, the enthusiastic crowd voluntarily began to distance themselves and retreat.

…I'd seen so many people who risked their lives to get a picture, so I was a little worried.

"Stretch your shoulders."

"Y-yes!"

"Ahyeon, you're so handsome!"

The last one was not said by me, but by a person who seemed to be a fan of Seon Ahyeon.

Seon Ahyeon's face became red as if it was broken.

"N-n-no…"

Muttering like that a few times, Seon Ahyeon straightened his body.

Anyway, I mechanically took a picture with the right composition, and as soon as I lowered my smartphone, Keun Sejin shouted next to me.

"Moondae! Me too!"

I turned around as I held Seon Ahyun's smartphone and took a photo of Keun Sejin.

It was cumbersome to take his pictures because Keun Sejin changed poses several times.

But people were eagerly filming the scene again with their smartphones.

"So cute…"

"Please do another pose~"

'…If that's the case, wouldn't it be fine if I didn't take a proof shot?'

I just had to go online and download anything that popped up on the internet.

"You too, Moondae!"

"Ah."

It would be weird if I was the only one not taking pictures, so I moved to the front of my billboard.

When I saw the billboard in front of my nose, which was completely exposed after everyone retreated, I felt a sense of intimidation due to its size.

The photo used for Park Moondae's billboard was taken during the production presentation.

Fortunately, it wasn't a photo of me poking my cheek or making a finger heart, but I was a bit embarrassed by the incredibly large size of the face.

'…Let's not make eye contact.'

As I turned my head, I saw the text written in the background.

[Park Moondae]

[A blue chip that appears like a comet!]

(TL note: blue chip = stock in a stock corporation with a national reputation for quality, reliability, and the ability to operate profitably in good and bad times. Sumber: Wiki.)

At the bottom, 'Please buy a lot.♡' was written in small letters.

"…"

That phrase is very impactful… I can't deny that.

'You must have had a hard time.'

I silently took a proof shot.

I had to show this much sincerity, at least.

And as soon as I took a picture and stepped away from the billboard, people started pouring in again.

"Are you here to see the advertisement?"

"W-what should I do…"

"Did you take a good picture?"

“I’m voting!”

Slowly, the number of people was increasing enough to interfere with the traffic. It was definitely worse than when I got off at the bus stop alone. It was a disadvantage that the three of us came here together.

If I do this wrong, wouldn’t I get called a nuisance?

I wanted to do something and left, but it seemed difficult.

‘I must use the strength of the three of us.’

I winked at the other two.

Fortunately, it looked like they understood the signal.

We bowed our heads.

“Thank you!”

“I’ll do my best!”

And immediately ran to the nearest exit.

As three tall men ran at once, the road naturally opened.

“We’re going to go now~ Thank you!”

Keun Sejin turned around, then waved and shouted. I could hear several voices answering as I followed them closely.

“Huh? Guys!”

“Goodbye!”

“Fighting!”

Fortunately, no one felt that it was rude, and their voices were bright.

It was my first time running while listening to so many cheers.

It felt very… Mysterious.

I immediately caught a taxi from the exit that popped out.

“Ah! That was really good!”

As soon as the taxi departed, Keun Sejin said this with a grin.

Sun Ahyeon also nodded wildly, looking rather excited.

‘Was it that good?’

Of course, I felt a sense of debt because I couldn’t thank them. However, being recognized by many people didn’t particularly heighten my mood.

Is it a matter of temperament? Or…

‘…It could be a matter of age.’

They were all 21 years old.

As I was feeling bitter all alone, Keun Sejin suddenly took out his smartphone with an exclamation ‘Ah!’.

And immediately there was a vibration in my phone.

[(Photo) (Photo)]

It was my picture taken in front of Park Moondae’s billboard.

Maybe the exposure value was so wrong that all the colors flew away, and my face, which looked ruined from all the shaking, was floating on a blank billboard.

“…”

He was terrible at taking pictures.

“Hey, doesn’t it look more realistic with the shaking?”

This was so full of realism that it was impossible to recognize anything other than the sense of realism.

When I looked at him without a word, Keun Sejin laughed and spoke to Seon Ahyeon, pretending not to know.

“Haha… Right, Ahyeon! You have my proof shot on your phone, too, right?”

“Y-yes! W-wait a minute”

Seon Ahyeon turned on his smartphone and posted a picture in the group chat.

These were the pictures of Keun Sejin and Seon Ahyeon that I took.

‘Why are you sending your picture?’

Maybe he was confused and ended up uploading it all at once.

“Oh~ the pictures taken by Moondae…”

Keun Sejin, who was looking at the screen pretending to be pleasant, paused as if speechless for a moment.

And with a slightly flustered look, this time he began to give a genuine exclamation.

“Uh, oh… You are really good at taking pictures.”

I made a living out of it for years, so it was natural.

I glanced at the screen.

The horizontal composition was perfect, the proportions of the human body didn’t seem awkward, and there were four or five photos of each person that captured their expressions and poses well.

It seemed that my skills weren’t rusty.

As I felt a little proud, Keun Sejin added in an awkward tone.

"…Well, I'll take a good picture of you next time. I'm sorry."

He seemed sincere.

A Keun Sejin without his usual flavor of business, I witnessed a lot of things today. I just shrugged.

"Well… A photo with a sense of realism is fine."

Keun Sejin made a surprised face for a moment, then quickly smiled and changed the subject.

"Right? Oh, come to think of it, are we just going to pass by the restaurant that Ahyeon recommended like this? That's too bad."

"I-it's okay. N-next time we come together…"

"…Hn."

Right, we had talked about it.

It was impossible to go to the restaurants that Seon Ahyeon recommended now.

Since he only selected popular places on SNS, if I went with these people, we would be broadcasting our meal live on other people's SNS.

In addition, it seemed that Seon Ahyeon wasn't very talented in browsing, the cost-effectiveness in these places wasn't very good because they just smelled like viral marketing.

After thinking for a while, I checked the navigation system while passing through the Ewha Womans University station.

"Sir, can you turn us to Yeonhui-dong?"

"I can~"

“Yes, then…”

I looked back at the two in the back seat.

“I know a quiet place, do you want to go there?”

“Oh~ Of course, I agree!”

“Y-yes!”

Right. I asked the driver for permission and changed the navigation to the restaurant’s location.

And only after the meal was over I realized that I had volunteered to do something I didn’t have to do.

Oh, my God. We’re getting closer!

* * *

“Hmm.”

The woman who was looking at the smartphone repeatedly agonized in a painful voice.

On the screen, an option that plunged her into a swamp of anguish appeared.

[Idol Inc. stock package discount! ~80%]

Under the large banner, there were stocks tied to all kinds of services sold by the group company of Tnet, the channel where <Idol Inc.> aired.

For example, if you buy Tnet’s music site package here, you will also receive a three-month streaming coupon with a 50% discount and the right to buy 20 stocks of <Idol Inc.>.

In short, she could give Moondae 20 more votes.

These broadcasters sold the stocks in a package like this, except for a monthly fixed-rate ticket that could give her one more vote every day!

The scary thing was, this package had a high discount rate, so it had a dual purpose in which existing service users bought this package to get a discount and then ended up falling into <Idol Inc.>.

'It's really terrible… '

The woman sighed as she scrolled through the pages, and saw the message that had just come up in a pop-up.

It was a message from the friend who fed Park Moondae to her mouth by requesting her to apply for the audience.

[Yeonju: crazycrazy ㅠㅠ Someone caught sight of Moondae! (Link)]

'Oh my gosh.'

The link that she clicked hastily led to an SNS post.

==========

[Oh, I just went out to eat with my family and saw an Idol Inc. participant. They seem to be those kids who sang MallangDalkom? (Photo)]

==========

In the attached photo, Park Moondae, Seon Ahyun, and Keun Sejin were seen receiving a ttukbaegi with samgyetang at a table with sagging partitions.

(TL note: ttukbaegi = a small, black-to-brown earthenware vessel used for various boiled dishes in Korean cuisine. Samgyetang = ginseng chicken soup.)

There was a long response below the picture.

– Look at his eyes on the samgyetang, they are about to pop out ㅋㅋㅋ

– As expected, K-samgyetang, is better than basic chicken, you know it

└Please stop the discrimination against chicken ㅠㅜ

– I am in favor of these three staying close

– Ah, they must have gone to eat there after seeing the billboard ㅠㅜㅠㅜ I love these cute guys ㅠㅜㅠㅜ

'Billboard?'

The woman searched for 'Park Moondae billboard' just in case.

Immediately, an article a few hours ago that had been shared by thousands of people appeared at the top.

==========

Moondae went to take a proof shot at his billboard ㅠㅜㅠㅜ There were so many people so he couldn't stay for a long time, but he was so cute and kind that my heart smashed into pieces. His face looked handsome even if he wore a mask (short video)

==========

When she played the attached video, Park Moondae, wearing jeans, a black hood, and a black baseball cap, stood in front of his billboard.

[Handsome!]

[I'll buy you a lot of stocks, Moondae!]

[Um, thank you…]

Park Moondae responded a little shyly to people's pouring words.

And the video ended with him and the two other participants happily sprinting and disappearing.

– So cute

– He’s more sociable than I thought?

– ㅠㅠAs expected, Moon Puppy is not just a delusional claim, it’s official ㅠㅠ What, Tibetan fox? It’s heresy!

– The PD who edited it, please die, our kid was just being calm

– Even if he wore a blonde hat it would match

‘Cute…! So cute!!’

As she stomped on her feet, she suddenly realized that Park Moondae’s billboard photo was familiar. It was the picture her friend showed to her after she had taken it!

She wrote a message quickly.

[Minso: Wow, isn’t this yours? Congrats, Moondae saw it! (link)]

[Yeonju: I lost my mind when I saw that, but now I have come to my senses… I didn’t do it, it was done by the fan association, but I’m still so excited… I’m overwhelmed…]

When she asked, ‘Why didn’t you tell me this first?’, the answer was ‘I couldn’t type because my heart was shaking so much’.

The woman giggled and sent a congratulatory emoticon. And she thought.

‘I want to do something for him, too.’

Park Moondae did well, so she wanted to see a lot of great performances.

Eventually, she went back to the previous purchase page and bought a music package.

After happily buying Moondae’s stock, she checked the Samgyetang restaurant, and in the witness article, a fight broke out.

– Please take down the photo. Stalking is a crime

└I just happened to see him. What stalking;; it's just a sighting

└Are you watching someone else eating and taking a picture without permission? Use your common sense and say something that makes sense

└Yes, I block them ㅅㄱ

(TL note: ㅅㄱ = keep up the good work. After the game is over, it is a term used to say to the opponent, and is also used to slander someone.)

After this conversation, the reactions of the people who were on fire were awkwardly fizzled out. This is because it was difficult to hear news of Park Moondae, so they reflexively got excited about the rare sightings and just now realized that it could be an invasion of privacy.

The woman was also embarrassed and turned off the window. She had forgotten that Moondae hadn't even made his debut yet.

'That's… Because he did so well…!'

As she recalled her previous audience experience, which made her mind dazed just thinking about it again, she suddenly remembered what she had forgotten.

"Ugh! <Idol Inc.> is airing!"

Right. In the first place, she was looking at the stock purchase page while waiting for Idol Inc. to air.

She hurriedly turned on the channel, and luckily was able to see the logo of the show that was just starting out.

"Phew…"

She was relieved, and suddenly the MC's meaningful face appeared on the show.

[Everyone, do you remember <Idol Inc.>'s promise?]

The MC hit the desk seriously as if he were sitting in front of a desk in the discussion room.

[We promise you that we will do everything as you wish. So, even now, numerous votes are being held on our website, such as the vote for the number of final debuts and the song selection.]

For reference, there were people crying, saying 'The final number of debut members I voted for is too small.'

[And today, we're going to carry out one more promise. Everyone. Do you have any participants you don't want to see?]

As soon as the broadcast started, in front of the viewers who were suddenly confused about what this was about, the production team threw a huge mess.

[Then sell that participant's stock! With the newly introduced <Selling Stocks> shareholders can reduce the stocks of the participants they do not want to see in the future!]

[The 'right to buy stocks' that shareholders purchase can also be used as a 'right to sell stocks' in the future. In other words! Instead of buying a particular participant's stock, you can sell it and make it negative!]

It was the arrival of hell.

CHAPTER 33

After the introduction of a new system to reduce the number of votes of participants in <Idol Inc.>

– Are you kidding me? ㅋㅋㅋ Are the producers crazy?

The Internet had become a mess.

– They've lost it, what if someone has a bad intention and holds a hate vote?

– It's not spicy anymore. It's hellfire

– Oh seriously, I can't watch the next ranking announcement because it's too painful, you bastards, what are you doing to the kids?

– Shouldn't we boycott at this point?

Posts criticizing the production team and the program first covered all the communities.

It was a natural reaction, but after this criticism became a basic sentiment, this kind of post began to appear.

– Participants who will benefit from this negative vote and those who will lose.jpg

It was a review of the participants.

If you go further from here, there will be a flurry of slanderous comments about the participants people don't want to push for.

"Hmm."

I skimmed through the post on the best bulletin board in seven minutes.

As I slowly scrolled down, I saw the name I was looking for.

[Park Moondae's risk of falling in rank ★★]

: Whenever stories about him come out, there are messy fights everywhere about whether his personality is good or not. There are kids who bite at a level of a psycho. His number might drop quite a bit.

'Two stars are fine.'

Honestly, I knew this would happen. This was because Park Moondae was an extreme character who either had to be liked or disliked, with no in-between.

'The PR live and the first team match editing was well done, so I guess that made up for it.'

In addition, the participants of October 31 who appeared in the first team match were latecomers at this point. This meant that they were bound to be beaten by malicious fans of existing strong participants.

When I scrolled down, except for Keun Sejin, everyone was in danger of falling in rank.

'Of course, I can't believe this one article alone.'

The fact that this article became popular and was not ignored by people meant that it was somewhat similar to public opinion.

Of course, there were fights in the comments.

– You wrote a long post, pretending that you're mastering the history of Idol Inc, and pretending to dominate public opinion on the Internett? ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– I'm already tired, I hope this stops, really…

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋThese people are obviously clenching their teeth, why are you guys sucking up to people who are being cursed at?ㅋ

– Isn't this the truth? Admit the realityㅎㅎ

And among these comments, there were people talking about the participants who were posted in the article.

They were mainly enjoying chewing, biting, and tasting the participants who were likely to fall.

– ㅋㅋㅋSejin's fall is confirmed~

– What about Raebin? He's going to go down further… I think the fans should be strong!

Of course, there were also quite a few attempts to drive public opinion by saying, 'I don't know why they wrote that, his rank is stable.'

-Ryu Chungwoo who was a member of the National team should be more than average, aren't many people selling his stocks because they are annoyed by how he is getting fans even during the broadcast?

'They are already creating excuses.'

Of course, there were quite a few stories about Park Moondae.

-I hope the kids who pick Moondae only choose one route. They said they couldn't believe his skills because of the editing, but they brought an edited version of his personalityㅋㅋ

└Yeah, let's not believe those people who believe in the broadcast's editing and say his personality is bad~ That's all

└I'm going crazy, just listen to him singing without music on PR LIVE. He's better than on TV. And why do you trust the edited version of the interview and pretend you didn't see the video that Moondae actually treated other participants well?

└You're rambling;; Ugh don't risk your life on an idol, ahjumma!

└Reported ㅅㄱ

'This… I'm sorry.'

I was speechless when I saw people suffering from Park Moondae's stocks.

Just because I was better at one thing didn't mean I could change the direction of the broadcast.

'Actually... I already knew.'

The introduction of this negative vote was so controversial that I, a civil student, knew about it.

There had been two or three times when <Re-listed! Idol Inc.> walked a crazy tightrope between going crazy and being ruined, and this was the first case.

Anyway, looking at the current trend, I didn't pay much attention because I didn't think I would be eliminated even if my vote rate dropped quite a bit, but when it came down to it... It bothered me.

Those who support 'Park Moondae'.

'I hope they don't get too stressed out.'

I hesitated, then turned off the window for now.

Actually, I was going to look at the reaction to the newly aired episode 6 rather than <Selling Stocks>, but there weren't that many because it got buried.

'In the first place, I don't have a lot of footage in episode 6.'

The stage of the team I belonged to was assigned to the next episode.

The team formation and song selection scenes were only partially shown, so there was little reaction.

– Ugh, Gommeo, why are you on the same team as Rae1bin ㅠㅠ Kim Raeb1n, please stop doing charity work. The last team was like a beggar too. Except for the faces, there's nothing to see... Ugh, how did you catch something like this...

– Mundae, don't stick to Eugene, just die

Mostly, only the reaction of these malicious fans remained. No, I don't know if you can call them fans.

'…Looking at it closely, Kim Raebin is being cursed, too?'

It was the kind of people I saw often even when I was selling data.

I didn't know why they were cursing while claiming to be a fan, but… The important thing was that there were more reactions saying that they hated him being on the same team as Park Moondae than those who didn't.

Even viewers who liked 'Park Moondae' said it was a shame that he couldn't be with the team members from the first team match.

I crossed my arms and smiled. I wondered how public opinion would change when episode 7 was aired.

The stage was definitely good, and there was a limit to what the editing could touch with it.

'So until then, I'll organize the status window pop-up and practice… '

Ding.

As I was thinking, my phone rang.

Maybe it was the same-age group chat. I unintentionally opened my smartphone.

As if they were copied and pasted, two messages arrived almost at the same time

[Kim Raebin: How are you, hyung? It's Kim Raebin. The reason I'm contacting you like this is because I have something to ask you.]

[Kim Raebin: Cha Eugene and I are going to Gangnam Station tomorrow to check the that our fans posted, do you want to check the with us… (More)]

"…"

Did my appear at Gangnam Station?

I searched and found an SNS post saying that it started today. How surprising. Kim Raebin seems to be good at searching?

But this timing was not good.

'The system of taking votes from participants has just been introduced, so there is no need to stand out.'

If there was a happy eyewitness account, bullshit like 'Park Moondae seems confident?' would come out.

Besides, going with Kim Raebin and Cha Eugene? I could already imagine the cursing.

– You must be so scared of the negative vote, you're acting like you're close to the popular boys ㅋㅋ

There was no need to make noises like this. Let's protect the people who support Park Moondae as much as possible.

I'd better wait and see until episode 7 aired.

I typed in a reply right away.

[Park Moondae: It will be difficult because I have work to do. See you next time.]

[Kim Raebin: Yes… Then I'll contact you again.]

I'll see you on the set.

With that assumption, I started stretching before starting to work out.

'Let's build up stamina.'

At this time, I never dreamed that Kim Raebin would send a greeting every day until the next filming.

It was not just a greeting, it was an image file of colorful greetings like those made by the elderly.

[Kim Raebin: (If you smile ^^ Blessings will come~ Let's make today a happy day with a pleasant morning~)]

"…?"

Maybe it's because the field is the art and physical education, every young person I meet recently has a really unique sensibility.

* * *

And finally, it was Friday night again.

[Kim Raebin: (Happy Friday @->— With all my heart in these roses^^ Sharing happiness and health)]

Somehow, The boomer-style picture was getting upgraded. Now it had a sparkle effect.

[Park Moondae: Take care of yourself, too.]

[Kim Raebin: Thank you.]

Anyway, if I wanted to have a 'happy and healthy' Friday as the phrase in Kim Raebin's image file said, today's episode 7 had to go well.

I started watching episode 7 drinking beer.

My portion was more likely to come out at the end of episode 7.

Because the production crew must have postponed the team with the highest ranking to the very end of the show.

As expected, other teams came out one after another.

I wasn't really interested in it, but I watched it carefully to see if there was anyone who could be a hit.

"There's nothing special."

There was no particularly conspicuously friendly or hostile editing. It was just an ordinary storyline about overcoming conflicts and lack of skills.

Then in the middle second half, Choi Wongil's team came out.

It was a team that had a lot of participants from the same team in the first team match, including Seon Ahyeon and Keun Sejin.

The editing potential exploded here.

[Choi Wongil: I don't know why you're only doing this to me…]

[Ha Iljun: What…?]

Choi Wongil's interview cut crossed over with the bewildered team members.

[Choi Wongil: (Staring) Aren't you being too much, Moondae hyung?]

Choi Wongil was completely overthrown.

"Wow…"

They sent it like this.

The production team showed Choi Wongil's uncooperative attitude in the first round.

To be honest, he was quite annoying in the first round, but I didn't know that it had been piling up and going to explode like this.

But it wasn't just me who built these stacks of karma.

[Kwon Heeseung:… Because he doesn't respond to me.]

Gold 2 seemed to have been a bit scornful since the first round. He didn't get a response when there was no camera.

[Kwon Heeseung: Maybe because I'm the youngest… or because I am the lowest (in rank).]

Of course, the crew who caught it with a fixed camera and sent it out were also disgusting people. Another participant talked nonsense to bring up the ratings.

[Big Sejin: Now, now! Wongil, I understand how you feel. Sit here.]

Just as I heard from Seon Ahyeon, the conflict being broadcasted was stopped and settled by Keun Sejin.

[Choi Wongil: It's true that I was a little emotional.]

The team practiced hard and that interview ended with a good performance on the stage, but not one covered their eyes and pretended nothing happened.

Already, Internet pages were being plastered with swear words.

– Is Choi Wongil's personality for real?

– He's a little emotional ㅋㅋㅋ Bullshit, he has anger issues

└But I feel worse because it feels like he's only doing it to people who seem easy

– Did you see him ignoring Heeseung? I almost had PTSD because it reminded me of my hard times from school…

– Park Moondae needs to be reevaluated, he was a Bodhisattva who willingly gave his part

'Um, it will be difficult if Park Moondae keeps being mentioned.'

If they praised my personality as they pleased and anything suspicious showed up again, the cursing would be doubled.

Fortunately, the team's stage was okay, so the appreciation on the stage took a stake, and the topic of Choi Wongil was pushed aside a bit.

When the story came up again, the focus was probably only on criticizing Choi Wongil.

'He doesn't look mentally well, he's going to have a hard time.'

I clicked my tongue and turned off the comments.

Now there were two teams left. Soon it would be my turn to come out.

Of course… Under the assumption that no one else stuffed their face.

'The high-ranking guys must be showing up a lot.'

I put down my expectations and continued watching.

And I was surprised.

Dudung!

On the screen, Kim Raebin's interview was reconstructed with a magnificent background sound.

Sparkling golden… With some homage-like captions.

[<Kim Raebin's journey to gather team members>]

[Kim Raebin: First of all, I am going to pick participant Park Moondae.]

"Cough."

I spit out the beer I was drinking.

CHAPTER 34

On the screen, Kim Raebin calmly explained the reason.

[Kim Raebin: Participant Park Moondae has a wide range of vocals, so there is no pressure in terms of selecting the song.]

[Kim Raebin: I also have seen a lot of scenes where he flexibly accepted other team members during group activities. He will be my first team member.]

Shortly after, the scene where Kim Raebin quickly won the mini-game and pointed to 'Park Moondae' was shown.

And an interview with Park Moondae who had a blank expression came out.

[Park Moondae:…?]

[Park Moondae: Thank you, but… (Why?)]

Thanks to the BGM and additional captions, Park Moondae, who joined Kim Raebin and bowed his head, seemed very flustered.

And another cut scene where Kim Raebin clenched his fists and expressed a small sense of victory was shown.

It was like a WeTube skit.

"…"

It wasn't just once or twice that the production team created reactions like this, but it was the first time they were able to pinpoint my true feelings.

[Kim Raebin: Next up is Cha Eugene.]

[Kim Raebin: And Ryu Chungwoo.]

Kim Raebin picked his team members without hesitation with his own logic, and the scene where the team members were confused continued.

It was a cute production in its own way.

'They must be trying to save Kim Raebin.'

It was an edit that openly neutralized his brutal appearance in the first round.

However, the atmosphere did not last long.

After the red caption 'But' appeared on the screen, a suffocating scene filled with only white noise was shown.

[Midterm evaluation a few days later.]

[Who rearranged it?]

The scene of Kim Raebin lowering his head was crossed with the scene of several team members looking back at him. A big caption popped up again.

[What happened?]

And…

An intermediate.

"…Hmm."

I poured the rest of the beer down my throat.

They were trying to get ratings… Now I'm amazed. It's great, <Idol Inc.> crew.

When I checked during the intermission, all kinds of speculation were rampant on the Internet.

The popular opinion was, 'Isn't Kim Raebin's team match ruined again?'

– From the moment the reason for choosing Park Moondae came out, I thought that he really had no eyes for people ㅋㅋㅋ

"No…"

So far, Park Moondae was the first to get rejected.

The beer made me feel a little more relaxed, but I was more pissed off than usual.

I turned off the screen grumpily and turned on Tnet again. The commercial had just ended.

As expected, after the song was decided, the discussion scene was broadcasted on the screen.

[Ryu Chungwoo: Shall we hear Sejin's opinions first?]

In general, the editing highlighted Ryu Chungwoo, who even took care of his less sociable team members.

In particular, his calm response to Lee Sejin's nervous reaction was shown on the screen.

'Lee Sejin, too.'

Is this going to be a picture of Ryu Chungwoo eating up everything again?

There were a few scenes that charmingly highlighted Cha Eugene as a choreography genius, and a few scenes of Kim Raebin spending time arranging the song, but the victory still belonged to Ryu Chungwoo's decision.

It was from the midterm evaluation that the situation changed.

[You touched the original song a lot, but it feels worse than the original song.]

The evaluation was edited more seriously than the original lukewarm atmosphere.

It was the effect of the original singer's sudden remarks being woven and inserted in the middle of the evaluation.

[On your stage… I couldn't feel the power of <Burning Like the Sun>.]

I didn't know that this bullshit would be aired.

In such a serious atmosphere, a team member pointed to Kim Raebin as the person involved in the arrangement.

[(Right away) Raebin did the arrangement.]

The team members' quick attention to Kim Raebin was blatantly emphasized on the broadcast.

It was a spine-chilling editing

'Damn it… '

I put on an act to cover this up, but are we all going down together?

At that moment, the screen suddenly began to zoom in on 'Park Moondae'.

"Huh?"

'No way.'

Park Moondae on the screen had a thoughtful expression on his face, and then a flashback cut was suddenly inserted.

[I think it'd be good to lower the key before doing it.]

[How about adding some rap?]

[The arrangement goes well with the concept of the cheering squad.]

[…Yes.]

It was a scene where some of the team members were telling Kim Raebin to try adding elements that didn't suit the song.

As Park Moondae observed it carefully, his gaze was directed in.

Then on the screen, the midterm evaluation came back again.

Park Moondae opened his mouth casually.

[Yes. Since Raebin could arrange it, we consulted with the arranger, and we all decided on the direction of the arrangement.]

Kim Raebin's face with a surprised expression was zoomed in.

Then, Park Moondae's interview was inserted.

[Q: Why did you defend Raebin?]

[Park Moondae: (Surprised) I was just telling the truth.]

That's… It was a cut from an interview related to arrangements for the first team match.

"…Huh."

'I was being deliberately blunt about it in order to naturally change the subject.'

After going through the magic of editing, Park Moondae, who didn't care about others, looked like he had just told the truth.

'It's absurd no matter how I think about it.'

Regardless of my bitterness, the broadcast went on.

[Sincerely conveyed.]

[Kim Yujun: I'm sorry…]

After the team member apologized to Kim Raebin, the atmosphere rapidly changed to hopeful and warm, and the focus was on Kim Raebin's touching interview.

[Kim Raebin: I think I have done well in gathering the team members.]

As he said that, Kim Raebin, who smiled faintly, surprisingly didn't look bad.

And the new arrangement… Ridiculously enough, Kim Raebin and Park Moondae were suddenly shown as if they were having fun with each other during chatting.

[Ryu Chungwoo: I saw the two of them talking about something during the break.]

[Ryu Chungwoo: But when I went back… Raebin was already on the keyboard, and Moondae was excited saying we would (beep-)]

The narration from Ryu Chungwoo's interview and the arrangement discussion process made it really look like that, so it was even more ridiculous.

[Ryu Chungwoo: Are geniuses like that? Haha.]

After that, the short cuts continued as if Ryu Chungwoo adored the two unsociable geniuses and the team was fused well, then the amount of preparation for the stage ended.

"…"

I really didn't expect it would work out like this.

Anyway, I wasn't shown as a bad person, so I would have to settle for this much.

Besides, I thought the stage was the best part of it, but I was very satisfied with how the production team took great care in editing it.

The ending was good, too.

[3rd place?]

[Nobody expected this.]

This was because they put the team's 3rd place in the middle of an and highlighted it as if it was very strange and shocking.

You can see that they have pulled out everything.

It's a neat profit.

"It's nice."

I straightened out the bedding. As the tension was eased, the fatigue set in.

'I can monitor the Internet tomorrow.'

Because I didn't look at the reaction immediately at this time, It was only around lunchtime the next day that I realized that the aftermath of my portion in Episode 7 was much greater than I had expected.

* * *

– I have decided to embrace Park Moondae. Compared to the guys in the first team match, he's a fairy

– Looking at Moondae again, his face is fine. He and Raebin seem to be doing well, so keep working as a team

– Rabbit and puppy are a fantastic combination, but the fact they're a medieval rabbit and a countryside mixed breed is the icing on the cake ㅠㅠ

– Oi oi, did you ever imagine a day when this combination would do badly? (Shrug)

– I thought we would fight, but we surprisingly became close:;

"…Oh."

Surprisingly, as soon as episode 7 aired, the public opinion of Park Moondae rapidly changed among Kim Raebin's fans.

Most of them were normal fan accounts that didn't slander other participants, but some of them used to giggle and called 'Park Moondae' with insults until yesterday.

What a change of pace.

Park Moondae's fan accounts who were worried about the negative votes were relieved, but some of them were angry.

– Whenever I see people just wash their mouths after cursing like that, it really… made me speechless. I hate myself for feeling relieved ㅠㅠ

– The thought of fangirling with those people once both of them debut made me sigh… I'll just watch Moonda1…

– Moondae showed a great attitude, came up with great ideas, and even performed a great stage, why should I care about anything else ㅋㅋ

'I hope they don't get too stressed out.'

Spending money should be fun, but these people didn't seem to be able to enjoy that, so I didn't feel good about it.

Even if we might debut on the same team in this program, all the participants were currently competing with each other so this part might be inevitable.

Still, most of them were happy that the stage was selected well.

Immediately after the main broadcast was over, seven episodes were arranged on the broadcast schedule from midnight to this morning and lunch, so the inflow effect could be seen.

The stage video immediately entered the WeTube real-time popularity ranking.

– How can these crazy people handle this crazy concept so well?;;;

– They're heroes who come to mess with my grade, but I love them

– I can't believe they changed the cheering song of the baseball stadium to a hero theme song. The stage, as well as the idea and arrangement skills, were absolutely phenomenal

– Ahh the kids must have matched their own colors too, they wore an item for each color! This kind of detail made my fangirling heart race ㅠㅠ

– Is this stage in 3rd place? Aren't you embarrassed by the vote? ㅋㅋ

– This is the summary. 0:06 Cha Eugene (Red), 0:16 Min Jeonghoon (Green), 0:24 Ryu Chungwoo (Blue)… [Watch more]

Personal fancams that were released at dawn were also having a terrifying increase in views.

This match was bigger than the first team match, but even taking that into account, the number of views on the 'Park Moondae' fancams was increasing tremendously fast for someone in the main vocalist position.

The comments were also more favorable than in the first round, and the 'dislike' ratio was lowered.

– I can't deny that he's a genius

– Thanks for the blonde hair, Moondae. Thanks to you, my sister cheered up and held back her resignation. I'll buy a lot of Moondae stocks ㅠㅠ Let's make a debut and try silver hair and pink hair ㅠㅠ

– It's amazing, being able to come up with a hero concept after horror! I'm rooting for you a lot. I hope you make a debut! ㅎㅎ

– Why do you look more handsome and better every time I see you? What will happen if I end up ascending to heaven once you debut? ㅠㅠ

I felt embarrassed, but I was happy.

Although this result was inevitable, I couldn't deny that I felt a sense of accomplishment.

As I thought so, the last best comment caught my eye.

-The main vocalist, who is not just young and cute but also good at dancing, is just like a left-handed pitcher. I would have to grab you from the pit of hell so thank you so much for walking into the idol market with your own feet. You can't get out anymore, Moondae^^

"…"

To be honest, I am a little scared.

'I won't suffer from an abnormal condition like 'unable to retire' once I debut right?'

I quickly dispelled the no-good ominous delusion and cleared my mind.

Anyway, at this rate, there seemed to be nothing to worry about at the next ranking announcement ceremony.

'Now, there are two stages left.'

After two more team matches, the program would end.

It felt strange to think that I had already entered to enter the second half of the show.

I thought it would be cool that the day where I could get rid of this trashy condition drew near, but it wasn't necessarily the case.

Maybe it was because my grades were much better than I had expected.

I'd been stuck in the corner of my room preparing for the civil exam for the past few years and I hadn't felt any sense of accomplishment, so the taste of this success was quite stimulating.

'I was worn out, so of course, I would get carried away.'

Avoiding sudden death… If I looked back at it a few years later, I might think of it as a meaningful experience.

Of course, that scenario won't happen if I fall behind, so let's think about survival first.

Ring.

As soon as I made up my mind, a message came in.

[Keun Sejin: MoondaeMoondae How are you doing? Do you want to go together with me on the day of the shoot? With Ahyeon too ㅎㅎ]

* * *

The faces of the guys I met on the day of the shoot were completely dead.

No, Choi Wongil the troll is removed so why are you guys dying? Who makes you like that?

CHAPTER 35

Seon Ahyeon and Keun Sejin asked to eat something before entering the filming set, so we met at a restaurant.

“Oh, Moondae, hi~”

“H-hello…”

But even with the food placed in front of them, they had dark expressions.

One of them became a social-life-reactions vending machine, and the other looked like he would burst into tears at any moment.

‘Is it because of the negative vote?’

It was a guess that made the most sense.

I thought about leaving it alone, but I wanted to know how they were doing so I asked once while eating.

“Is it because you’re worried about the voting?”

“H-huh?”

“Both of you don’t look good.”

Then, the two of them look at each other’s faces reflexively.

Perhaps because they were in a bad mood, they didn’t realize that the other person was in a bad mood.

“Ah, Moondae, you’re like a ghost~ No, well… It’s hard not to worry. I’ve been looking at the Internet too much, haha.”

Keun Sejin trembled and joked soullessly. At his words, Seon Ahyeon also nodded with a gloomy face.

“I-I’m afraid I’ll be hated…”

Aigoo.

It seems that they had been searching for articles that they didn’t need to see. Looking at this atmosphere, it was clear that they couldn’t leave SNS all night and kept searching for their names.

When they entered the set, they would see the number of people who hate them, so it was understandable that they couldn’t easily swallow food in this situation.

‘…But you have to eat before you go.’

I pondered for a moment, then finally sighed and said.

“Since it’s an audition program, wouldn’t there be more people who keep us in check than those who actually hate us? If you get a lot of negative votes, it could mean you look promising.”

“…!”

Even in the previous team match, the team full of high-ranked players ended up in 3rd place in the on-site voting.

“It means you don’t have to worry about it unless you show up a lot.”

Of course, that didn’t mean you could ignore it. But it would be better if you had a spot where you could mentally win.

As expected, Keun Sejin recovered first.

“That’s true.”

Then, with a bitter smile, he lifted his spoon and muttered to himself.

"…I really need to get something done this time. My trainee period was too long… Well, anyway, let's eat well and cheer up!"

He quickly wrapped up the words that came out of nowhere and resumed his meal diligently.

Seon Ahyeon still looked anxious, but he ate diligently when I said, 'Isn't it be better to eat before you go?'

'It's hard to eat sometimes.'

I also resumed eating with a sigh.

Although they were latecomers, they got roughed up a bit because they were well known, so it was obvious how the other participants were doing if even these two kids who were never smashed by editing were being like this.

'The mood of today's shooting must be crazy.'

And this prediction was exactly right.

"…"

From the participants at risk of being eliminated to the high-ranked participants, all of them had the atmosphere of a funeral home.

This was because slander and rumors about the participants on the Internet got worse after the 'If you're disliked, get out' voting system was introduced.

Cha Eugene was the only one who was excited. It wasn't the confidence of the first place, it was just a personality problem.

"Why didn't you go with me?"

He even came to me and excitedly talked about the day he saw the billboard. He had a really great personality.

It wasn't long before the shooting started.

“Welcome to the second-ranking announcement of <Re-listed! Idol Inc.>!”

I didn’t know how it would come out on the show, but the ranking announcement ceremony was held in a more depressing atmosphere than ever.

“The first ranking with the newly introduced system <Stock Selling> will be announced today. The ranking is determined by how many people bought and sold the stocks.”

Gulp. I heard someone swallowing saliva and a small voice praying.

I guess grown-ups do child-like things when they can’t do something.

“Before that, we should announce the final winner of the last team match, right? I told you that there is a huge prize waiting for the final winner.”

Despite the heavy atmosphere, the MC said everything he had to say cheerfully.

“That is, <Selling Stocks> becomes invalid!”

“…What?!”

“Heol.”

For a moment, the surroundings were filled with astonishment.

“The team that won first place will be ranked using the number of votes that don’t include negative votes of <Selling Stocks>!”

The reaction did not get bigger, but rather died down weakly. And someone murmured a little.

“That’s too much.”

Certainly, it was an idea that couldn’t be done if they respected the participants. It was like the production team was taking off and adding the benefits however they wanted.

‘In the first place, they strike with the negative vote in episode 6 without prior notice, so what is it that they want?’

“First place… Congratulations! Team ‘Gigantic’ that reinterpreted <Fingerprint>!

Choi Wongil’s team eventually took the final first place.

Perhaps Choi Wongil, who would certainly be eliminated due to the <Selling Stock> system, was given a rescue signal.

Choi Wongil cried and was relieved, but it wasn’t a good thing.

‘He’s in trouble.’

If his rank dropped due to negative votes, there was a high possibility that sympathy would rise.

However, if he got lucky like this, negative public opinion would surely explode unless he made a huge achievement in the next team match.

In any case, the announcement of the 1st place came to an end with a reasonable impression.

“Then, from now on, we will start the ranking announcement ceremony!”

The total number of successful applicants was 30. Like the last ranking announcement, it began to be announced from 28th place, leaving out two people.

“In the 28th place is Park Joonkyung!”

In fact, there was no significant change until the 20th place. There was no one who got an exceptional cut scene or a lesser cut scene. Participants who could compete in those rankings were called without much reversal.

It was from the top 20 that an unexpected event appeared.

“In the 20th place… Participant Choi Wongil!”

“Wow.”

“Awesome.”

He was ranked higher than Gold 2.

Perhaps his rank went up because fans who were conscious of the negative votes gathered together and voted.

Choi Wongil attached an apology at the end of his long speech.

“…Also, I deeply reflect on my immature attitude…… I-I’ll show you my good side from now on.”

And he sat down in his seat, crying.

‘Wouldn’t it be better to point out Gold 2 and apologize?’

Well, it’s not something I have to worry about. Let’s worry about my ranking.

To summarize the ranking after that… Lee Sejin plunged, and Kim Raebin succeeded in reviving and settled in sixth place.

And participants who were on Choi Wongil’s team, including Keun Sejin, rose. Their ranking rose sharply because the negative votes were removed.

Looking at the flow, I thought I was probably going to fall a little too. So, I was ready to respond immediately if I got called soon.

But there was no need to.

My rank had risen.

“4th place is… Participant Park Moondae!”

“…?”

It was an unexpected save in this chaos.

I wasn't called until the 5th place, so I wondered if I had plunged below the 28th place, but I didn't expect to be called in 4th place.

When I jumped up flustering, something even more embarrassing was waiting for me.

"Congratulations!"

Ryu Chungwoo got up and approached me then he patted me on the back with a pleased expression. Following Ryu Chungwoo, Cha Eugene also approached and congratulated me.

"Congratulations!"

'I was just going to pretend I knew you…?'

Apparently, the reaction on stage was so good that it narrowed the distance between us.

In particular, Ryu Chungwoo didn't have many close participants because all the people in the last team match were out.

I roughly accepted their greetings, made a high five with Seon Ahyeon who was standing awkwardly and went up to the podium.

I felt like a rare insider. It was very unfamiliar.

"…First of all, thank you to the shareholders who bought my stocks. Keeping in mind that my rank is too high compared to my skills, I'll strive to achieve as much result as you've invested in."

As soon as the standard appreciation was over, the MC came in.

"Participant Park Moondae, you've entertained the shareholders with ideas that stand out on every stage. Is there any idea you want to use next time?"

It was a terribly difficult question. Showing off a little bit of aegyo would have been easier.

Let's just say it moderately and comprehensively.

"…Next time, I'd like to try something more cheerful."

"Haha, are you slowly missing <POP☆CON>? Participant Park Moondae, I look forward to your next performance."

How could there be an MC who combined cheerfulness with popcorn?

Of course, I couldn't glare at the MC, so I calmly lowered my head and went up to my seat.

To be honest, the fancy sofa given to the fourth place seemed embarrassing. But since my back was honest, I waited more comfortably for the rest of the ranking announcement.

"Third place is Cha Eugene!"

"Heol."

"He was number one."

Cha Eugene, who topped the ranking announcement ceremony last time, fell two notches.

But he didn't seem to care much. He came up with a bright impression 'I am happy that I get a high rank' and settled down on the sofa.

And the long-awaited battle for 1st and 2nd place.

It was Ryu Chungwoo and Seon Ahyeon who made it to the finals.

'Isn't he going to pass out?'

Seon Ahyeon staggered and stood on the platform. He looked like he would immediately pass out if he won first place.

"<Re-listed! Idol Inc.> the first place of glory… Congratulations! Participant Ryu Chungwoo!"

“Thank you!”

First place was Ryu Chungwoo. In fact, I knew it would be like this unless something unusual happened.

Since he was a graduate of the national university and had a favorable broadcasting image, the negative vote probably didn’t affect him much.

After Ryu Chungwoo and Seon Ahyeon finished their speech, the announcement for the 29th and 30th place continued. It took so long that my back was starting to ache on the sofa.

But the real highlight came next.

“This is the rank you would have gotten if it hadn’t been for the <Selling Stocks> system!”

This was because the production team released all the votes and the negative votes, rearranged them, and put them on the screen.

There were groans all over the place.

“I can’t watch.”

I also quickly found ‘Park Moondae’ on the screen.

[Bought: 893,452 / Sold: 12,257]

[Total ranking: 4th / Purchased ranking: 3rd]

3rd place?

When I checked the 4th place, which was originally my rank, it was Seon Ahyeon.

It seemed that there was a significant difference in the negative votes because the number of votes at the top was similar.

But I felt a different feeling than regret.

'This is surprisingly… Upsetting.'

[Sold: 12,257]

Right. Even though the results were good, looking at the 10,000 unit number of people who wished that 'Park Moondae' would fall… It felt a bit strange.

'It's a lot more impactful than I thought… '

…Wait!

'Stop talking nonsense.'

My goal is to avoid sudden death by debuting.

Damn it, how could I think that just having one negative vote out of 90 votes is not good enough?

'Let's just thank the 890,000 votes to prevent sudden death.'

I defined the situation and ended my thoughts.

However, when I looked around, most of them had a face that said 'It's driving me crazy' regardless of their ranking.

'The next team match is going to work very well.'

The kids who were already squeezing tears with runny noses looked good in my eyes.

* * *

"Wait a minute!"

The filming of the next team match, which should have been held as soon as the ranking ceremony was over, was temporarily suspended, as the production team seemed to be flustered by the funeral-like atmosphere.

Instead, the production crew came out with some strange mini-plan.

<Idol talent show>.

…This hasty plan is very tacky.

CHAPTER 36

The production team's explanation was simple.

Take some time to relax by playing and winning prizes.

In other words, this is what they meant.

'You guys should act cute and enjoy the school trip vibe and then we get to do some promotion for T1 products.'

Everyone probably guessed the nuance but compared to the aftermath of the ranking announcement ceremony, the atmosphere became better.

The product was good and the rules were loose.

"There is no ranking, so it will progress according to your will~"

"Ah…"

"If you come out, you can unconditionally win one of the prizes!"

"…Yes!"

The answering voices were more relaxed.

This was because it was a format where they had nothing to lose.

'The fact that there is no MC also played a part in making us really feels like we're taking a rest.'

…To be honest, I was tempted by the dryer too.

I lived in a one-room apartment so I had no place to put it, but I didn't expect such large electronics to come out as products of this hasty plan.

‘I guess the program is going really well.’

As I thought so while looking at the picture of the kimchi refrigerator included in the product, the photos of the product disappeared from the screen and large letters appeared.

[Talent show: Random dance.]

[The one who stays until the end is the winner!]

‘You guys even left the font as it is.’

The Hamchorong font was brilliant.

Regardless of my impression, soon there was a five-second countdown on the screen.

Then some of the guys who were in good condition ran out and began to wait.

[Start!]

And famous KPOP chorus came out one after another.

“Ugh.”

“Hey, you’re wrong! We have to go in!”

“W-what?”

At first, the participants joined in mechanically, but probably because of the amount of time, they almost made a skit to determine the winner in the end.

After about 12 songs, the winner came out.

“Ah, thank you~”

It was Keun Sejin.

“No one asked, but I’ll tell you how I feel. I think the PR live sharpened my skills for this day. Hahaha!”

“Wow~”

Keun Sejin, who did similar content during PR, smiled brazenly and said that then he quickly put his hand into the draw box to pick a note.

“Now, my prize product is…”

[(Real) 1 box of boneless chicken feet.]

“I’ll give it to Moondae.”

The participants burst into laughter at Keun Sejin’s rapid change of attitude. Even the staff covered their mouths and laughed, so there was no angle that showed me frowning at Keun Sejin who looked this way and winked.

‘How long will this chicken feet image last?’

I had a foreboding feeling that if it continued being mentioned like this, it would follow me until I retired.

Anyway, the atmosphere became even more relaxed because Keun Sejin gave a big laugh.

“Give me the next one, please!”

“This is amusing, really.”

After four or five more matches like this, the majority of the participants were serious about the talent show.

And there were still a few expensive home appliances left as prize products.

Then the sixth talent show appeared on the screen.

[Talent show: Random karaoke]

[The one who sings the first verse is the winner!]

“This is an event for me.”

“Wow, I really want to go out, but haven’t I already won? What should I do?”

Ignoring Keun Sejin who was being noisy, I hesitated for a moment and then moved forward.

“Oh~~ Are you confident, Moondae?”

In fact, I wasn’t very confident. I didn’t want to make it a big thing.

This was just a defense in case showing a passive appearance after ranking up made me look arrogant.

…If possible, it would be better to win and take the dryer.

There were seven products left, so the chance of getting it was 14%, which was good enough for me to be hopeful.

With four participants facing each other, I waited for the countdown to end. The production crew quietly left a microphone on the floor.

[Start!]

As soon as the screen changed, an intro immediately flowed.

Boom Clap Boom Clap Boom Shake Boom Clap~

An addictive melody resounded in the auditorium.

“…?”

“What?”

The faces of the participants, who thought KPOP would come out, became blank.

Yes, what came out was a K-trot karaoke accompaniment.

“Uh…”

“Wait, wait.”

Participants listened to the intro with confused expressions, but they couldn’t tell what song it was just by listening to the intro.

This was because there were more than one or two trot songs that started with an exciting rhythm in the intro

“…”

I was in conflict, but I eventually sneaked forward and picked up the microphone.

“…!!”

“Moondae sings trot…?”

Gold 1’s murmur was heard all the way here.

“Maybe he just grab it?”

“Does he really know that song?”

I didn’t answer the shouts and just started singing at the end of the intro.

“It’s raining on Namdaemun Street in Seou~ There’s no one I’m looking for~”

“…!!”

The participants were whispering.

“Heol.”

“How did he know?”

How do I know? I’ve seen it a lot.

When I went to filmings a few times, I often saw the stage of trot singers.

Especially since it was often placed right before the idol stage, I had listened to quite a lot of songs that were popular with the elderly enough to show it later in the event.

The original singer's performance… Hmm, I probably saw it twice a day back when I saw this kind of event a lot.

Later, the singer recognized me and winked at the camera.

I remembered uploading the fancam on WeTube out of conscience. Hmm, it helped me this way.

"Ah~ The one I've been looking for~ The one I've been looking for~"

Since it was quite a famous song, the participants sang along when it entered the chorus. I wondered if the singer felt like this at the event.

"I left Seoul~"

"Ooh."

After I pointlessly sang the first verse following the mood, the participants applauded with admiration.

This was more than cheering… It was like a reaction you would show when watching a strange scene in a magic show.

It was a little embarrassing, but it was successful anyway, so I decided to focus on drawing the prize.

I greeted the participants a few times, then put down the microphone and grabbed the draw box.

When I opened the note, I could see a frozen silver body in the picture.

'Maybe the dryer…!'

[Kimchi refrigerator]

"……"

Crazy.

"Hey! Kimchi refrigerator!"

"What's up with Moondae's luck~!"

"It's the refrigerator Moondae was looking for."

Participants poured out and surrounded me with excitement. I looked at the note with a bewildered feeling and suddenly realized the reality.

'…Don't they give the goods without paying the taxes?'

I had no money to pay the taxes.

As soon as I received the product, I would sell it through a second-hand transaction, pay the tax, and fill up my bank account.

Anyway, it felt good to catch something expensive.

Keun Sejin, who was celebrating next to me, whispered softly.

"Moondae, let's exchange products…"

"I won't."

"Yes."

Eat your chicken feet.

* * *

After the last match, the talent show ended splendidly, and the filming of the team match began in a more relaxed atmosphere.

I wonder if it was difficult for the MC to proceed due to the adjusted filming schedule, and surprisingly, Youngrin took the lead and announced a new team

match.

“<Re-listed! Idol Inc.>, it’s already the third team match. Participants, I’d like you to praise yourself for holding on from 77 people to 30 people.”

Although it wasn’t the MC’s lively voice, Youngrin proceeded with the situation calmly and seriously.

Above all, they were words from an already successful idol, so the participants seemed to take it more meaningfully.

Right next to me, Gold 2 was smiling and stroking his own hair. It was quite a spectacle.

“In this third team match, the team is built in a rather unusual way.”

Let’s see, so far, the team has been formed by the choice of participants, so it’s time for other factors to intervene.

But the element was a bit unusual.

“It’s the big data algorithm.”

“…What?”

“Big data?”

When the concept we usually saw on IT news suddenly appeared, the participants looked at Youngrin with puzzled expressions.

Youngrin smiled and continued speaking.

“<Idol Inc.> analyzed the patterns in which shareholders buy your stock. So the team is formed around stocks that a number of shareholders bought together at the same time.”

In other words, it meant that the money-spending viewers were tying us together and forming a team of their favorite participants.

“Detailed analysis data can be found on <Re-listed! Idol Inc.> website. Everyone, are you ready to meet your team members selected by the big data of shareholders?”

“Gasp.”

“It’s so exciting.”

Participants began whispering with silly expressions and looking around to see who they would be with.

I also looked around the participants in moderation.

‘First of all… I think Seon Ahyeon and Keun Sejin will be there.’

I knew it would be these two just by looking at SNS. Unsurprisingly, Seon Ahyeon waved to me with his eyes shining brightly.

Keun Sejin took a step forward and patted me on the back and said.

“Hey, I look forward to your kind cooperation.”

“Yeah. Okay.”

Keun Sejin giggled to himself at my blunt answer. I guess he thought my words were a joke.

“Looks like you’re ready. Then come out in order and pick up the box.”

Behind Youngrin, a table with black boxes was set up.

“There are badges in the box. After receiving the box, go down the hallway and enter the room marked with the badge.“

Then Youngrin called the participants in alphabetical order and began handing the boxes to them.

Of course, ‘Park Moondae’ was called quite early.

“Participant Park Moondae. Please take the box.”

I took a box that had the name ‘Park Moondae’ on it and went out the door.

Of course, a staff with a camera was waiting in the hallway. When I opened the box in front of them, a rabbit head-shaped badge appeared.

“…Rabbit?”

I murmured a little bewildered, then quickly closed my mouth, conscious of the camera.

Then I looked up and checked the rooms lined up in the hallway. Each room had a nameplate.

<Chicken>

<Cat>

<Deer>

<Puppy>

<Bear>

And I found the name I was looking for in the last room.

<Rabbit>

“…”

Overall… The naming sense that felt like a kindergarten class stood out.

‘Well, it’s just dividing the team.’

Presuming it was meant to be humorous, I immediately opened the door.

I wasn’t too nervous because all the participants who were likely to be on the same team would be called later than me.

'I'm probably the first one.'

But as soon as I opened the door and stepped in, the person sitting on the floor suddenly raised his head and looked at me.

"…?"

It was Kim Raebin.

Why are you here…?

"Park Moondae hyung."

Kim Raebin jumped to his feet with a happy face, then he slowly moved over and stepped aside.

It seemed he was being considerate by letting me sit in the middle.

But, there are only two of us…?

"I didn't know I could be on the same team again. It's really nice to see you."

"…Right. I look forward to your kind cooperation."

"Yes."

It was a peaceful conversation, but complex reasonings flowed in my head.

'Why is Kim Raebin on the same team as me?'

It was only in the previous episode 7 that I had an interaction with Kim Raebin.

So the percentage of votes after episode 7 was big enough to affect the 'big data algorithm'?

'Of course, it would be possible if we only considered the stocks of the previous ranking announcement ceremony, but… '

As I weighed the possibilities, I realized a simple fact.

'Aha.'

It was because Kim Raebin was rarely involved with other participants.

I didn't know how it was weighted, but it was quite convincing that he joined the team because the only participants involved with Kim Raebin were me and Cha Eugene.

'Well, it's good to have high-ranking participants.'

I neatly organized my thoughts and sat down on the floor. Kim Raebin immediately talked to me again.

"Hyung, the song you just sang at the talent show, it's my favorite song too."

"…Really?"

I wondered if I really needed to know that Kim Raebin liked trot, but anyway, we passed the time by chatting roughly until the next team member came in

Then, after quite some time, the next team member opened the door and came in.

CHAPTER 37

The participant who entered the <Rabbit> room after me was Seon Ahyeon.

"…Ah!"

Seon Ahyeon sneaked into the room with a nervous face, and as soon as he met my eyes, his expression brightened and he quickly ran inside.

And smiled broadly.

"I-it's nice that we're together t-this time."

"Yeah, please take care of me."

"Hn, I-I will do my best…"

It was at that point that Seon Ahyeon, who was excited and opened his mouth right away, made eye contact with Kim Raebin, who was looking this way.

"…!!"

Seon Ahyeon was shocked and stiffened the moment that he realized Kim Raebin's existence.

'Come to think of it, these two have no contact with each other.'

Because their grades were different and they'd never met in a team match.

Seon Ahyeon hurriedly stepped forward, looked between me and Kim Raebin, swallowed his saliva, and greeted Kim Raebin.

"P-p-please take good care of me…"

He was so serious.

“Yes, I look forward to your kind cooperation.”

“N-no, it should be me…”

Kim Raebin also bowed his head with a serious look. Then Seon Ahyeon quickly slammed his head down to the floor.

It was a strange scene that I had only seen happen in Internet humor.

‘If these two are left alone, the conversation won’t proceed.’

As I watched Kim Raebin and Seon Ahyeon’s personnel battle, which was likely to continue forever, the fourth team member opened the door vigorously and entered.

“Who’s the rabbit?!”

It was Keun Sejin. I didn’t know why, but it seemed he was completely absorbed in the room concept as he waved the rabbit head-shaped badge in one hand.

Keun Sejin quickly confirmed Seon Ahyeon and Kim Raebin. And then he looked at me and laughed.

Why again?

“What, why are you here, Moondae?”

“…?”

When I looked at him with a look that asked what nonsense he was saying, Keun Sejin continued to slowly speak.

“No, there is a <Puppy> room so I thought you naturally would be there. I thought we couldn’t do it together this time.”

“…”

Was the Tibetan fox interview not enough? I intended to take on the puppy image, but the reality check was a separate matter, I wanted to hit this guy at

least once.

Keun Sejin quickly approached the people and changed the subject.

“Anyway, isn’t it good to do it together~ Our team is good this time too! Let’s do well! Is there one more person left?”

The total number of room with nameplates were six. Considering that there were currently 30 active participants, there was an extremely high probability that each room would be assigned five people.

‘Then since there are four people who have come so far, there’s only one person left.’

But I didn’t know who would come.

‘For now, we’ve got all positions as they are.’

The team members were evenly distributed without overlapping images and both our ranks and skills were good.

Kim Raebin would arrange the song, and Keun Sejin would likely pick the leader role anyway, so it was good too. All-rounder Seon Ahyeon made the stage easier.

In fact, it meant that it didn’t matter if there were just four of us like this.

‘As long as a troll doesn’t come.’

I remembered several of them, including Choi Wongil. It didn’t really matter who came if it wasn’t for them.

The problem was that until now, the team members had never been smoothly organized.

I assessed the situation.

‘From here… I can cover up for Lee Sejin.’

Because even though he was uncooperative, he wasn’t the type to bombard others for profit, so I just had to be gentle with him.

Still, there was a possibility that his mentality died down because of the ranking announcement ceremony, so it was better not to do it together with him if possible.

Then the last team member I am hoping for… Well, in alphabetical order, there was only one person left besides the ones that were already sold out.

'Gold 1 is the most comforting.'

When thinking of the participant with the highest possibility, Keun Sejin smiled and suggested.

"Why don't we hide behind the door? He's the last one, it would be nice to welcome him with all of our heart and sincerity."

It was an obvious idea, but it was also a joke that would come out well on the show if the last team member's reaction was okay.

The problem was that if Choi Wongil came in like this, the atmosphere would be weird, but the other three already went behind the door so I just gave up.

If I stopped them, I would be the one who looked weird in front of the camera.

The small murmur of the team members from behind the door was heard in one ear, and Keun Sejin, who was attached to the wall, shouted quietly.

"He's here!"

Then he boisterously raised his index finger and put it on top of his lips. I was keeping my mouth shut anyway, so I just continued to stay silent.

Soon the door opened with the sound of footsteps.

"Excuse me… Eh?"

"Ta-da!"

After a while, a head popped out from behind the door.

“Gyaaah!”

The participant, who opened the door and looked inside, jumped into the sky and moved funny. The guy was more of a scaredy-cat than I expected.

‘Congratulations on getting a broadcast portion.’

The last team member who rolled around with a strange scream had a familiar face.

“Aigoo, I’m sorry. Hyung!”

Unexpectedly, Gold 1 joined.

‘…This is fine.’

For the first time, I gave a positive evaluation after seeing the team composition.

* * *

“Please take good care of our rabbit class~”

“Wow!”

Clap clap clap. The discussion began with an ordinary reaction without any expression.

Including my college life, the atmosphere was the most harmonious among the team projects I’d ever been through.

With the camera on, no one was swearing or doing anything else.

‘It’s like a real kindergarten.’

Of course, not all teams were on the hopeful side like the <Rabbit> class.

For example, the two or three teams that were tied with the lower ranks due to the crowding of ranking sections had already given up halfway.

“Ah…”

“Well, let’s do well…”

“…So it becomes like this.”

However, unexpectedly, the despair came out from a different team consisting of top-level trainees. Choi Wongil and Lee Sejin joined Ryu Chungwoo and Cha Eugene’s team. In addition, the troll who grabbed Kim Raebin by the collar was on that team.

Some of the participants murmured.

“How can they get tied up like that?”

“The combination is amazing.”

I could hear Ryu Chungwoo’s stomach melting down all the way from here.

‘It’s unfortunate, but it’s rather good for me.’

It would be convenient if they took all the aggro editing.

By the time I drew this brief conclusion, Keun Sejin was proceeding with the discussion.

“Now, let’s talk about the song first! Is there a song you want to sing?”

A number of team members raised their hands with their eyes shining. Even Seon Ahyeon slowly lifted his hand up, everyone looked pretty excited.

It was understandable. Since ‘Free Song Selection’ finally came out for the first time.

I remembered the MC’s announcement I had just heard.

‘You can choose every detail you want, including songs, choreography, and concepts that suit your team! It’s called <Self-produced Stage!>’

In other words, the production team wanted to eat it raw.

'Last season, they picked using mini-games.'

This meant that the production team had already prepared the concepts in advance, including the costumes and stage equipment. It was a structure in which the participants chose what they wanted from among them.

However, this season, without any such thing, they were telling us to come up with it on our own.

Perhaps at the time of this season's planning, they couldn't plan ahead due to a lack of budget.

By the way, the show was successful and gained a lot of additional budgets, and one of its advantages was that there were few budget restrictions on the content now.

'That's probably why they're all excited.'

I listened to other team members' opinions one by one.

The order of the speaking was set clockwise, and Seon Ahyeon, who got the right to speak first, shouted a little.

"H-how about <I Like the Wait>…!"

<I Like the Wait>. Its distinctive features were the high notes and musical-like choreography.

The refreshing and sophisticated teen sensibility hit the target audience properly.

As of this point, it was a song released by a nine-member boyband five years ago, and it gave the group the honor of winning first place.

Looking back on his track record, it was a song that Seon Ahyeon would surely like.

“Oh, the first nominated song is great.”

“That’s right. We’re all young! Refreshing! The concept has never been shown before.”

I added a word, too.

“It’s fine.”

“H-Hn!!”

Seon Ahyeon lit up and nodded wildly. Even if it wasn’t chosen like this, he looked like he was going to die from just positive reactions.

‘How can you live like that with that face?’

It was a bit pitifully absurd.

“Next is Raebin!”

“Considering the composition of the members, I think VTIC sunbaenim’s <Soul(Hone)> is the most effective choice.”

His comments poured out as if he was prepared for this.

“It used a lot of oriental sound samples, so the concept is unique, and the range is appropriate. It’s a song with a difficulty level of choreography, so it’s easy to show performance elements, and it’s easy to put a dance break interlude. I can draft the arrangement within a day!”

“Yes…”

‘You must really want to do it.’

Maybe I wasn’t the only one who thought so, the other team members responded slowly with bewildered expressions.

Then Kim Raebin looked around and hesitated.

“Well, of course… if you have any other good opinions, that’s fine.”

“Okay okay, I also like the song that Raebin chose. Let’s listen to other opinions slowly~”

Keun Sejin shrugged it off.

‘But it would be better to listen to the opinions of the person who will arrange the song in detail.’

It seemed Keun Sejin didn’t intend to accept Kim Raebin’s words more, perhaps there was a song he wanted to push for.

‘Should I take it?’

I opened my mouth.

“What was your favorite part among the things you said?”

“What?… Ah, well, rather than liking a particular element, I took into account the overall best fit for the task.“

It meant that his focus was on the overall perfection of the stage. I nodded.

“I’ll keep that in mind.”

“That’s right. I was surprised.”

“Raebin has a plan!”

“…Thank you.”

When the team members praised him, Kim Raebin bowed his head and muttered.

After a brief atmosphere of warmly watching the awkward Kim Raebin was created, Keun Sejin finally gave his opinion.

“Now is the time.”

"…?"

"We've come this far, so it's time for a sexy concept…!"

"S-s-sexy…"

"Argh!"

"Ugh…"

Cringed reactions followed. Keun Sejin laughed out loud.

"Hahaha! Can you honestly deny it? Can you?"

"…"

It was silly to brazenly say it out loud, but…

'…That makes sense.'

There was no denying that it was a good idea.

'If we pull it off properly, there's no stronger concept than this.'

The sexy concept had traditionally been proved as a route to success, If you could look great while keeping the level of sophistication,

I crossed my arms and asked Keun Sejin.

"What kind of song do you want to do?"

"Oh? As expected, Moondae has a good eye. Actually, I don't want to push for one song in particular, but rather, compare several songs… I'd like to discuss and decide on a song that will most successfully show the sexy concept, what do you think?"

"…"

It was good.

But the other two opinions were also good.

I turned my head and looked at Gold 1, who had not yet spoken.

The figure of Gold 1 was burned white.

“I… don’t know. I was just trying to live it up with rabbits. But everyone… seem to have… A very clear vision…?”

It seemed other opinions were so firm that he lost his fighting power. It was understandable. I shrugged my shoulders.

“M-Moondae… W-what do you want to do?”

“Me? I haven’t decided anything in particular.”

When I answered Seon Ahyeon’s question right away, Keun Sejin’s eyes shone.

“Oh, then I want to hear Moondae’s choice! Which of our opinions do you like best?“

“…!”

Sejin Keun’s words caught the attention of the rest of the team.

It was very burdensome. However, it was a situation that couldn’t be ignored.

‘Which do I like best?’

I was lost in thought.

CHAPTER 38

“First of all, I want to do <I Like the Wait>.”

“…!!”

Seon Ahyeon looked visibly shaken.

His attitude showed that he didn’t expect I would sympathize with his song selection.

“R-R-Really?”

“Yes.”

It was true that <I Like the Wait> was a good song, and the fact that it was a song from 5 years ago added an extra point.

<Soul> that Kim Raebin mentioned was a song two years ago.

‘I thought about it during the first team match, but VTIC’s latest song is burdensome.’

Kim Raebin himself seemed confident, but we didn’t have to take risks.

However, I had to reflect on the opinion of Kim Raebin, the person who would lead the arrangement.

To take advantage of his characteristic, <Maestro>, I had to throw a keyword that suited his taste.

Contrary to Seon Ahyeon’s expression of joy, Kim Raebin looked a little gloomy. I guess he already expected that his opinion wouldn’t be accepted.

“But ‘self-production’ is the theme of this team match, so it’s hard to put up the original song as it is.”

“Ah…”

“So I wish there’s an unconventional arrangement. Personally, among what Raebin suggested earlier, ‘Oriental style’ seems the best.”

“That.”

Kim Raebin looked dazed as if lost in thought and immediately rejoiced.

“Certainly, the lyrics aren’t awkward either… With the right instrument, I can come up with a very interesting arrangement. If we modify the choreography according to the arrangement, we will be able to create very impressive stage scenes.”

“That’s a relief.”

For once, Raebin let it pass.

Then all that’s left is Keun Sejin and Gold 1.

I turned my head and scanned the two.

As soon as our eyes met, Keun Sejin smiled calmly.

“What about arranging it in a sexy oriental style?”

“…!”

“Even if we go with the oriental style anyway, we have to decide what kind of atmosphere we want to use in it. If possible, let’s put on sexy impact, that’s all!”

His words weren’t wrong.

‘You must have thought of this since the beginning… ’

Among the opinions that came out so far, no one commented that we couldn’t use the ‘sexy concept’ so he probably intended to tie it up like this regardless of my answer.

'Funnily enough, it's hard to refute him.'

Sure enough, Gold 1 sighed playfully.

"You're such a great guy, really…"

In fact, he meant it. Looking at the other two's expressions, they already let it pass.

"Haha, am I like that?"

Keun Sejin shrugged. With this, the opinions of the four team members were reflected in the song selection.

'Since it's like this, let's take the remaining one.'

There were few viewers who hated a warm and democratic team atmosphere. I opened my mouth again calmly.

"Shall we use the rabbit, too?"

"What?"

Gold 1 waved his hand.

"Oh, what I said? It's all right. I was just saying it."

"No, I thought it will suit us well."

"…The rabbit?"

"Yes. There are rabbits in old Korean stories."

The other team members seemed to have come up with their own ideas.

"B-Byeoljubujeon?"

(TL: Byeoljubujeon or 'The Story of the Rabbit' is one of Korean classic novels from the Joseon Dynasty.)

“That… Is ‘The Tortoise and the Hare’ a Korean story?”

“It’s Aesop’s Fable.”

Keun Sejin laughed secretly among the team members. A quick-witted guy.

“Moon Rabbit?”

“Moon Rabbit. That’s right.”

It was the rabbit in the old story of pounding rice cakes on the moon. It was also known as the Jade Rabbit.

It was also famous for the nursery rhyme with the lyrics under the katsura trees.

“…How do you make it sexy?”

Gold 1 murmured in dismay, saying that it might be a destruction of childhood innocence. It must have reminded him of the playboy-magazine style rabbit.

But it seemed Kim Raebin liked this keyword, his face cleared up and his eyes shone. It was honestly comfortable that I didn’t have to open my mouth.

“I think we can reconstruct it by just taking the motif instead of using it as it is. It’s an attractive concept if we can make good use of its image as a fantasy animal.”

“Oh, is that so? Of course, it would be nice if you could put in my opinion.”

Gold 1 nodded shakily. Keun Sejin immediately cleared up the situation.

“Hmm~ I like it, too! Shall we decide by raising our hands?”

A few nearby teams had already decided on a song and were informing the production team.

Due to the time limit, it was time for our team to conclude the song selection and move on to the details.

“Raise your hand if you agree with the idea of reinterpreting <I Like the Wait> with the Moon Rabbit’s sexy oriental concept!”

Immediately, everyone’s hands came up. As soon as he finished speaking, Keun Sejin also raised his hand and laughed.

“Wow, that was really democratic~ All of our opinions have been taken into account. Let’s work hard!”

“Yes!”

“Yay-“

The discussion ended with friendly applause just like when it began.

It was then.

“I don’t want to!”

Someone got up screaming from the other team over there.

I happened to catch his face. It was Lee Sejin.

“What’s going on?”

“Uh…”

“Are they fighting?”

The participants around quietly whispered.

But everyone seemed to be reticent. Because saying useless words was like sending a signal that you wanted to be a victim of editing.

Meanwhile, Lee Sejin was staring at the participants on the opposite side.

I could see Choi Wongil with a stiff face and Cha Eugene with a dead expression.

But the standoff did not last long.

Lee Sejin got up, turned around, and ran out of the set with his teeth clenched.

"…!!"

"Heol. They're…"

Fortunately, Ryu Chungwoo immediately regained his composure and followed Lee Sejin.

"You guys wait a minute… Sejin? Lee Sejin!"

A camera hurriedly followed Ryu Chungwoo.

"……"

Wow, over there is really… screwed.

The atmosphere was transparent enough that even Cha Eugene got dragged into it.

"Aigoo…"

Gold 1 sighed briefly.

Kim Raebin's face became dark as if the trauma of the last team match had relapsed.

However, no one was ignorant enough to approach that team and ask questions or offer comfort.

It had been several weeks since filming, so there was no participant who still couldn't understand the situation.

'If you're meddling, you'll just become the broadcast's scapegoat.'

So, the <Rabbit> class quickly finished reporting the song to the production team and moved to the practice room.

It was a wise decision.

* * *

It was long past midnight when the <Rabbit> class returned to the dorm.

Everyone looked like a withered bean sprout.

“The bedroom is nice…”

Keun Sejin made a dying sound and fell on the bed.

He couldn’t stand the crazy schedule of taking care of the arrangement, revising the choreography, and performing stage concepts for 10 days, so he was K.O.

“I-I’m going to wash up…”

Seon Ahyeon said those words and couldn’t get out of bed.

“…”

He’d been in a state of extreme tension as he continued to recreate the choreography according to the process of the arrangement, and in the end, it seemed his mental strength couldn’t stand it.

Gold 1 limped to another room, saying he needed to eat something. I think he was going to get Gold 2’s cup noodles, but he’d take care of it.

“…May I use the shower first…”

“Yes.”

Kim Raebin called Seon Ahyeon a few times, and when there was no answer, he asked me for permission and went into the bathroom.

So I’m the only sane person left in this room.

Ah, why am I relatively fine?

Of course, it’s the status window. I thought of the new characteristic that floated at the bottom of the status window.

[Characteristics: Bacchus 500 (B)]

– Clear mind and healthy body!

: Fatigue accumulation rate -50%

After the last team match stage was aired, it was a characteristic selected as a reward for the next stage of 'Fame Achievement'.

[Calling for fame!]

500,000 people remembered your existence!

: Draw Rare Characteristics ☜ Click!

Quite frankly, it was an unrealistic number.

500,000 people?

How many alternative programs had been released that had more than 500,000 people remember one participant? It was a surprising number even for the top participants.

Considering the speed, it was a little terrifying to think that the number of people would surpass one million soon.

'One million people… No, isn't it 'Park Moondae' whom they remember?'

At times like this, I thought it was rather fortunate that it was someone else's body.

In any case, the 500,000 units fame achievement draw hit the jackpot. It was the most useful thing I'd gotten so far in this survival environment.

There was no immediate increase in lung capacity or muscle strength, but busy and physically exhausting days had certainly become easier to bear.

'Even after running so hard, I still have room to organize my thoughts.'

I got up from my seat and stretched briefly. Anyway, I was tired and drowsy.

'I should wash up and go to bed as soon as Raebin comes out.'

Then, there was a sound from the door.

Knock. Knock.

"…?"

Gold 1? But if it was him, he wouldn't have come in with a knock.

'If it were a staff member, they would have already said who they were.'

I couldn't guess who it was.

Knock. Knock. Knock!

But the knock continued. However, the team members that might get a visitor were passed out.

'…It's bothering me.'

I sighed then got up and opened the door.

"…!"

Cha Eugene was standing outside.

It was surprising, but it was also understandable. He must have come to meet Kim Raebin who was from the same agency.

The problem was that he was crying.

Cha Eugene was sobbing, wiping away all his tears and snot.

"…"

'…Why are you crying here?'

It was very disconcerting.

Fixed cameras were also installed in the hallway and rooms of the accommodation. If so, he would have been caught coming here and crying, but I had no idea how it would turn out on the show.

No, more than that, why did you have to crawl in here?

'Isn't it common sense to consult with Ryu Chungwoo?'

Considering Ryu Chungwoo's personality, he would have comforted him well already. Why do you come to another team and make a fuss?

'Come to think of it, I don't think he's smart in that area… '

In a moment of silence, I thought of all sorts of things and finally opened my mouth.

"…Did you come to see Raebin?"

"I came here to meet hyung and Raebin."

Cha Eugene replied with an unclear pronunciation.

'Why me?'

I didn't think we'd made that much of a connection. Well, I guess you liked the last team match.

The results were good and the process (from Cha Eugene's point of view) might have been mindlessly fun.

'After tasting the hell of this team match, you must have missed it again.'

Anyway, if I sent him back, I didn't think it would be edited positively no matter what kind of pictures appeared on the broadcast.

I sighed and answered.

“Come on in. Raebin is washing up.”

“Yes…”

Cha Yu-jin kept sniffling and entered the room.

Other team members were sleeping soundly in bed. I didn’t bother to lower the volume because I was certain that they wouldn’t wake up with this much noise.

I sat down in front of a nearby table for now.

‘Should I give him something?’

I looked at Cha Eugene’s upset face, then pulled out a few chocolate bars from my bag and handed them to him.

You’d feel better with something sweet.

“Thank you…”

Cha Eugene took the chocolate bar with a ruined pronunciation and put it in his mouth.

“…”

Only the sound of chewing chocolate echoed through the room. I was uneasy.

‘This… Should I ask this bastard something?’

There was no worse situation than having to ask and intervene in other people’s team circumstances.

However, it was also a problem if I kept my mouth shut and let Kim Raebin talk.

‘Kim Raebin isn’t the social type either.’

I had no idea what kind of situation this would turn into. I would be in trouble if the arrow came back to me who was just passing by.

In the end, feeling like I was clearing out landmines, I opened my mouth again.

CHAPTER 39

"Are you having a hard time?"

I asked it vaguely on purpose. I hoped the listener would respond appropriately.

However, Cha Eugene, who put a chocolate bar in his mouth, began to shed tears more sorrowfully.

You're driving me crazy…

I don't know if everyone is sensitive because the field is arts and physical education, or if it's because survival is brutally hard, but I think I've seen too many people crying these days.

"Everyone is fighting… If I say nothing, it gets scary, sniff."

"…Hmm."

Cha Eugene looked completely dead. There was no trace of the bright loudmouth from a while ago.

No matter how you look at it, isn't this team ruined within a day?

'It really is just like the name <Puppy> room.'

(TL note: because dog could also mean a swear word, that's why Moondae said that.)

Those guys, if it aired like this, people would ridicule them by tying them up with the room name.

However, it was funny that 'Park Moondae' gave advice to Cha Eugene.

No matter what I said, if I made a single mistake, Internet public opinion would bombard me with posts such as *'Am I the only one who thinks that Park Moondae*

is wrong?'. Because he was from a different team.

'I'll send him back when he calms down.'

Instead, I just said something else seriously.

"Do you want more chocolate bars?"

"…"

Cha Eugene nodded. I took another handful of chocolate bars out of my bag and gave them to him.

'…I'm glad I brought a lot.'

It was fortunate that there was still one more large bag left. If I looked like I didn't want to waste the chocolates on him, I might get in trouble.

With the sound of running water coming from the bathroom in the background, I spent the moment in silence with Cha Eugene who was chewing on chocolate.

Soon after, Cha Eugene got up and bowed his head, holding a chocolate bar in both hands.

"Thank you."

He seemed to have calmed down a bit and was thinking of going back. I couldn't thank him enough for not giving me the details.

Let's just say something that fits the situation.

"Will it be okay to not see Raebin?"

"Yes… I'll be fine."

"Okay."

Cha Eugene stopped crying and seemed a little more energetic than before.

‘Isn’t it because of the sugar high?’

I wondered if he would start crying again once he ran out of sugar, but the priority was to send this bomb away.

I watched Cha Eugene for a moment as he trudged down the hallway and then closed the door.

Then I breathed a sigh of relief.

‘I’m so busy that I’m going to die, but there are mines everywhere.’

Now that we were in the second half, I had to be more careful not to get caught in the broadcast. Because once things plummeted, there might be no time to rebound.

The problem was that I couldn’t control everything just by being careful.

‘Just, let’s not stand out… If I keep going like this, I’ll make it to the end.’

I reflected on it and stretched out on the bed. And I fell asleep in an instant.

It was the next morning when I realized that I had slept without washing up.

* * *

While the participants were struggling with preparing for the stage and suffering from planning and creating everything from scratch.

Outside the set, episode 8 of <Re-listed! Idol Inc.> was aired.

– Heol

– Why him?

– Awesome ㅋㅋ

– ??

The higher the ranking, the more unexpected it was, and the real-time viewers were shocked, but what was even more unexpected was the reward for winning the last team match.

[Negative vote is invalid]

It infuriated people that some of them were able to avoid the brutal voting methods that would reflect on 'how much they are hated'.

– ㅋㅋㅋ It's amazing

– I'm a fool for spending money on a program like this

– The winning team has a participant pushed by the production team 100%ㅋㅋㅋ You're going to let them avoid it like this?

The irony was that this anger was directed at the participants rather than the production team that created the system and planned the prize.

As someone who benefited the most from this reward, Choi Wongil, who was originally eliminated, was criticized by public opinion.

But viewers' anger didn't end there.

Even the public opinion of the participants of the winning team, whose rankings had risen significantly, temporarily deteriorated significantly.

– Heol, Seon Ahyeon pushed Cha Eugene to second place…

– Is he crying again? I am tired of the tears

– It would be nice if his votes didn't get cut. My child laughed and said thank you even though he was pushed back while that guy stuttered and looked dead ㅠㅠ

– Ugh. Seon Ahyeon who can't even speak properly is in second placeㅋㅋㅋㅋ Fools who give sympathy votes to the disabled who will stutter his thoughts when he debuts, you guys need to wake upㅋㅋ

└This comment is crazy;; Aren't you crossing the lines?

└ㅋㅋㅋㅋThe stutterer's crazy fans are coming soon

└You guys are beyond imagination, disgusting.

└You're cursing at me because you can't refute itㅋㅋ D-d-don't tell me, you really think he deserves second place?ㅋㅋ

Even the main criticism that hadn't appeared on the surface, conscious of the minimum morality, had appeared in the comments.

There were many people who were astonished or tried to stop it, but if the number of headcounts was similar, the aggressive public opinion was bound to gain strength,

But with that reaction, favorable public opinion was formed on the participants who showed determination even though their rank was pushed back due to negative voting and the reward for the winning team.

– Guys, you've worked hardㅠㅠ

– Where there is light, there are shadows. Don't worry too much about the weird losers who use negative voting~ I'm rooting for you^^

– It must have been a bummer, but thank you for showing your courage

Thanks to this, Park Moondae, who had a higher rank before the correction, fortunately avoided huge criticism even after his ranking rose.

Instead, there had been a slight change in the fan base.

Fans who preferred Park Moondae's appearance in the second team match took the lead while people who liked Moondae's team in the first team match were discouraged by the criticism.

– Moondae, congratulations on winning 4th place, you've worked hardㅠㅠ
(Video of getting congratulated by the 2nd team members)

– 'Hyung, what are you doing?' the triple shot of Moondae's expressionㅋㅋㅋㅋ
'Why is the cat doing this to the dog…?' (Captured video with Cha Eugene)

(Humorous photo of a cat and a dog)

– It's so funny that Moondae couldn't win against the other kids this time, so he was half-forced to be an insiderㅋㅋㅋ

– If you look at the corner, Moon Puppy is giving out snacksㅠㅠㅠ Ahh an Angel… Angel Puppy… (short video)

Fans of the other two participants, who hadn't had a strong group of participants until now, were also excited and sneaked into the flow.

They were fans of Cha Eugene and Kim Raebin.

– Moon Puppy Kim Rabbit Cha Kitty, dog rabbit cat, Isn't it a heart-throbbing combination? Try it just once. Try try (photo)

– My kids are so cute even though they look like they'll ignore me when I talk to them on the streetㅠㅠ (Video from the show)

– Animal Heroes, dispatch! (Fan art)

Even the combination that included Ryu Chungwoo was overflowing on SNS from time to time.

As people who fell in love with the program through the second team match were mixed with the people who poured out anger and kept the participants in check, the overheated atmosphere became worse.

Because of this over-immersion which crossed over between fire hell and ondol rooms, the Internet was literally in chaos.

(TL note: Ondol or gudeul in Korean traditional architecture, is underfloor heating that uses direct heat transfer from wood smoke to heat the underside of a thick masonry floor. Sumber: Wiki.)

It was even worse because the program was running on the road of extreme box office success.

Beyond the entertainment community, if you looked at any online community now, you could see articles about <Idol Inc.>.

And every article was filled with people fighting and stressed out.

[Survival pro participant who is popular these days]

: (Photo) It's a participant named Cha Eugene, but do women like this kind of feminine men these days? Tsk… The world is ending.

– The eyes… He looks like a wildcat… It's an unfortunate impression…

– Ugly old man ㅋㅋ

– Why? He's a handsome young man^^ My daughter said she likes him.

– This program is popular among young kids these days~ There's a fellow who sings really well, I'll give him a vote if he goes to the final~

└You mean Park Moondae ㅋ He looks good-natured, but… Aren't singers supposed to be the best at singing ㅋ

└Wake up, are you too old to see? Cha Eugene is very clever. The young man who used to do archery is also very good. I support these two.

└Ahjumma, you're the one who needs to wake up

When the comments caught fire like this, someone captured it on SNS, and dozens of fights emerged in the articles every day.

[Idol Inc. Boomer community reaction.jpg]

: (Capture) ㅋㅋㅋ The crazy collaboration between an old man who is being severely dealt with and an old man who scolds him ㅋㅋㅋ

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋ Cha Eugene is a superstar. All of my friends saved pictures of Cha Eugene, he's a 180-tall baby kitty

– It's ridiculous that Seon Ahyeon who is not mentioned here is in second place, really…

└This article doesn't represent every netizen's opinions, so why do your thoughts flow that way;;

└ㅋㅋ Just by mentioning Seon Ahyeon, I get labeled as a bastard by the fans rushing in, so I shouldn't mention him ㅇㅇ

└What you're doing right now is slandering, not criticizing. What did Ahyeon do wrong?

└Look, it's starting again ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

And at this time, participants were able to access this turbulent Internet public opinion in real time.

* * *

To be honest, this was my first thought.

'I survived.'

I was lucky enough to avoid public criticism and I was in a good state because I wasn't praised aggressively enough for the backlash to come.

I was even secretly grouped with top-ranked participants.

However, nothing was more rewarding than the relief.

I rubbed the screen with my thumb. A scroll appeared on the side and all kinds of abusive comments were swept up.

'Somehow… I feel bitter.'

To be honest, none of the contestants who were being criticized right now had shown bad personalities except for Choi Wongil.

Most of them were just hard-working children, but did they have to be beaten up like this?

It had nothing to do with me, and to be blunt, I would benefit from other people falling, but even when this gave me benefit for survival, it left a bad aftertaste.

'Besides, this timing… '

– We will distribute equipment to search data~

Since this team match was self-produced, our smartphones were returned for a while to search for specific concept materials.

Originally, carrying a smartphone was prohibited during the filming.

This allowed the participants to be isolated from public opinion outside, but the rule was broken in this team match.

In addition, because the program was so popular, it was impossible to avoid posts related to it when accessing the Internet.

Thanks to that, I'd been looking through posts about the situation of these guys.

"…"

The dorm room was quiet with team members staring at their smartphones without saying a word.

Maybe the other rooms were in a similar atmosphere.

Moreover, apparently, this team had a participant who was currently facing heavy blows from the internet.

Seon Ahyeon.

'Isn't he going to cry?'

I broke out in cold sweats as I thought that I should check Seon Ahyeon's awful state in the bunk bed below.

Because I had an ominous hunch.

'Isn't this going to cause him a mental breakdown and deactivate his characteristic?'

If Seon Ahyeon's 'Grit' characteristic was deactivated again, the 'lack of self-esteem' status abnormality would be revived.

Then, would Seon Ahyeon, who received a crazy penalty that lowered his overall ability by two grades, be able to properly perform on the stage?

It wouldn't be surprising if both the stage completion and the team match editing were ruined.

I sighed silently.

'…I knew these team members are too good to be true.'

There was never a day when a team match went comfortably well.

'I'll have to check his status first.'

"Seon Ahyeon."

I dragged my face out of the bed and bent down. Seon Ahyeon, who was sitting on the bed, turned his head.

"Y-yes!"

"…?"

Why is he okay?

CHAPTER 40

I was a little bewildered.

Due to Seon Ahyeon's personality, I thought he would be stuck in a corner crying, but his face showed more composure than I thought.

How should I say this? Rather, it felt like he'd entered a military regulation.

He wasn't even holding a smartphone.

On the contrary, it was only when I called him and didn't say anything that he started looking frightened.

"W-What is it…?"

"No, um…"

There was no need to scratch the wound. I glossed over my words, and instead took a chocolate bar out of my bag.

It was an action I learned through the Cha Eugene incident.

"Do you want some?"

"H-Hn! Thank you…"

Seon Ahyeon accepted the chocolate bar with both hands as if he was accepting an offering and put it in his bag.

"…?"

Aren't you going to eat it?

As if conscious of my question, Seon Ahyeon hesitated.

“I-I have to take care of my weight… W-When my body gets heavy, my dance becomes weird. I-I shouldn’t get used to late-night snacks.”

“Is that so?”

He used to be a dance major. I was going to accept it and move on, but then I suddenly found a contradiction.

“Didn’t you give me a chocolate bar past midnight during the evaluation?”

“M-Moondae is fine! You were so skinny back then…”

“…”

There was a story like this?

To my surprise, I heard a laugh from the bed next to me.

“That’s right, Park Moondae was really thin back then, so I thought you were over-managing yourself.”

“But your body? When I see you eat… You don’t gain weight compared to what goes in your mouth. If it were me, I would have turned into a pig.”

Keun Sejin and Gold 1 each chipped in. Oh, dear.

‘I ate a lot on purpose because of my stamina, but it seems I have been misunderstood.’

It was unpleasant, but thanks to this nonsense, the atmosphere in the room seemed to have loosened up a bit.

Seon Ahyeon also laughed a little below me, and when my cold eyes met his, he was startled and started coughing.

“…”

Really… He’s an unusual guy.

I silently threw the bottle of water by the bedside.

Seon Ahyeon took the bottle after struggling a few times and drank it.

And murmured softly.

“I-I want to do well. Better.”

“…Right.”

Judging from his remarks, it seemed that Seon Ahyeon had checked public opinion on the Internet. But I didn’t look too closely so I wondered if he was just maintaining his composure.

After pondering about it, I quietly tried my luck.

“…Let’s not look for anything else on the Internet and just research the data because it might get you concerned for no reason.”

“Ah…”

Seon Ahyeon exclaimed with a mysterious face and suddenly answered with a shout.

“I-I already knew, so it’s okay. I-I’m ready.”

“What?”

‘What are you talking about?’

Seon Ahyeon muttered with an embarrassed expression.

“I-I already saw all those posts before the filming. A-As I kept looking, it kept coming out…”

“…”

That’s why he looked so gloomy when I met him on the day of the shoot.

At that time, public opinion was not as bad as it is now, so isn't that kind of comment normally kept out of the surface of the Internet?

Perhaps Seon Ahyeon, who wasn't very familiar with the Internet, had looked into everything without knowing the extent.

'How far did you search?'

I felt like he'd been looking at the ridiculous bullshitting posts where there were only abusive comments about idols all day long.

Seon Ahyeon continued to speak as if he was making excuses.

"I-I knew this would happen someday. I-I'm ready. I-It's okay. I-I'm used to it."

"Is that so?"

"Y-Yes!"

Seon Ahyeon nodded quickly, but I was secretly disturbed.

'When he said he was used to it, it seemed he was talking about being criticized for his stuttering.'

I had thought about it for a long time, but it was clear that he had tasted hell in peer relationships. Teenagers these days are scary.

I clicked my tongue inwardly.

"Don't worry, it won't last long. If we do well on stage, it will disappear again."

"I-Is that so?"

"Yes, it's a survival program."

It was always like that with those cheap bastards. The reality is sh*tty, so it's fun to curse at someone you can bite on the Internet.

If another celebrity became a hot topic, they would move on.

I shrugged my shoulders.

“I might get cursed at from tomorrow onwards.”

“Huh? N-No…! Y-You didn’t do anything wrong…”

“You didn’t do anything wrong either.”

“…”

When Seon Ahyeon got flustered and closed his mouth, Keun Sejin answered instead.

“So what you want to say to Ahyeon is ‘Don’t take insults for granted’, right? Kya~ Isn’t Moondae too cool? If I were a viewer, I’d already bought stocks.”

“Yeah, that’s right.”

“Wow, this doesn’t work anymore?.”

Keun Sejin laughed and rolled around the bed. Gold 1, who was using the lower bed, was terrified but gave words of encouragement to the team members.

“Stop it, you crazy punk! The bed is going to collapse!… Yes, let’s just work hard. Let’s do our best for this performance!”

“Let’s do it!”

The constant effort to somehow sublimate the situation into motivation raised the mood of the bedroom. A friendly atmosphere was vigorously incited.

And Kim Raebin, who had been keeping his mouth closed, muttered in a small voice.

“Yes. In that sense, I found and organized the example materials for costumes and patterns for props, is it okay to post them in the group chat room now…”

“…Ah.”

“Oh.”

Right. That’s the purpose of holding the smartphone.

He must have found it earlier, but it seemed that he couldn’t speak because of the atmosphere.

From Kim Raebin’s perspective, he had received all kinds of curses during the first team match, so the internet for him right now must be like a fairy. He would have no problem exploring around.

“…Um, of course.”

“Yes, I will send them.”

The sound of Gold 1’s dry cough echoed through the bedroom along with the sound of smartphones vibrating here and there.

I checked the data posted by Kim Raebin.

[Color_material_arrangement of pattern_clothes_base.xlsx]

[Prop pattern_Detailed list_No base.xlsx]

When I clicked on it, it was not an ordinary skill to sort them by category. The production team probably didn’t expect this much either.

‘You have good skills.’

As if everyone had similar thoughts, exclamations and simple compliments came and went. Keun Sejin even whistled.

“…Thank you.”

After Kim Raebin’s awkward thanks, the team members continued to discuss the costumes and stage props until 3 a.m.

It seemed that the determination to make a good stage was somehow expressed through the act of ‘Sleeping only after you die’.

I had a status window, but these guys were really great.

* * *

After two more days of labor and practice from dawn to dawn, It was time for the damn midterm evaluation again.

This time, the stage director, the music director, and the costume team also sat down and evaluated us along with the trainers.

First of all, if I had to evaluate myself, even if I thought about it as objectively as possible, the current direction of this team was good.

Still, I wasn't expecting much. Because I had never received good reviews in the evaluation so far.

But this time the result… It was honestly good.

"I love it."

"Let's just go like this!"

For once, the feedback started with these sentences.

Looking at the smiling trainers and the admiring judges, the team members gradually realized the situation.

First, the choreographer.

"Who made the choreography? You did it all together? No, there must be someone who planned it… Wow, you guys got it right, right? You really did it together?… Yeah, whoever did it will show up on the broadcast. Anyway, I have nothing to say because you did well."

Next up was vocal trainer Muddy.

"First of all, I'm so proud that everyone moves like that and the pitch doesn't change! Also, it's attractive how you changed the way the original song is sung,

and the way you sing according to the newly interpreted parts. Let's sing the whole song with this feeling!"

Even Youngrin who rarely complimented openly.

"I know it's a stage with a lot of thought and practice, but the best thing is that it doesn't feel like the work of an amateur. Even though it's a mid-term evaluation, your stage is already complete. I can't wait to see you on stage."

Up to this point, the team members had become 'thank you' bots and only expressed gratitude.

Amid a series of favorable reviews that would have made anyone shed tears, even the director and the costume team gave praise.

"Looking at the draft you wrote here, we immediately felt that you paid a lot of attention to detail. From what you've prepared, I think it'll look good on stage."

"It's a team that arranged the song very easily. I have a lot of friends, and it was fun for us to pick the sound without talking about anything else. Seeing it today, the stage is just as cool as we expected."

"The team's outfit entered the production stage very quickly. The concept was clear and there weren't many ambiguous parts. I can't wait to see you perform on stage wearing the clothes we made~"

After this whirlwind of praise, the faces of the team members were really worth seeing.

Perhaps because they were so happy, they didn't realize that they were nodding their heads with stupid expressions.

Even Keun Sejin couldn't finish his words properly.

"Team, no, uh… Thank you. We'll work harder!"

"Don't get hurt by working too hard!"

Clap clap clap. Then, with the sound of applause from the judges, the group bid farewell and returned to their seats.

The team members, who were completely blown away, watched the rest of the other teams' performances and only showed reflexive reactions that followed the trend. There was no other audience.

I was stunned, too.

'It's going so well?'

I couldn't sleep well for a few days and I was just focused on completing this so I wasn't sure how good this would look.

At best, it would end with 'it's fine'.

'…Anyway, I feel good.'

The sense of accomplishment was somewhat uplifting.

I enjoyed the sense of accomplishment for a while as I stared at the performances of other team participants.

It was close to midnight when the midterm evaluation was completely over.

"It was so good."

"I think so, too."

"Same."

The team members murmured in their beds. It was only after it was over that I could feel it properly, and a sense of happiness that had never felt before flowed through my voice.

"I think we can do really well."

"T-That's right."

This conversation pattern repeated several more times.

'Are we going to bed just like this today?'

It had been a while since I'd slept for more than four hours.

I quickly closed my eyes. But at that moment, talk about work came out again.

"Oh, I haven't decided on the color of the sleeves."

"Oh, right."

These guys were really tough. I forced myself to open my eyes. Damn it.

"I have a few things to look at too, wait a minute."

The sound of Keun Sejin's tapping on the smartphone screen rang out.

"I saw it here…"

But the next words did not come. Keun Sejin stood still holding his smartphone.

"What is it?"

"Why are you like this?"

Keun Sejin, whose face was white, was looking at the screen.

The colors of the smartphone screen shining in the dark bedroom were clearly visible even though the distance was quite far away.

'It's a gossip board.'

Linked to a portal site, it was a bulletin board famous for all kinds of conflict materials, rumors, and controversial articles.

Without saying anything more to Keun Sejin, I accessed the bulletin board with my smartphone.

And I saw a post that had already entered the rankings even though it just appeared 30 minutes ago.

[3rd place! Idol Inc. Keun Sejin is accused of bullying] (425)]

It was a big beautiful landmine.

*'Oh, sh*t.'*

No wonder I was so lucky today.

CHAPTER 41

School violence in the idol industry was a scandal that had no real answer. The data accumulated from the past incidents that had occurred so far proved that.

Especially when bullying or physical violence entered the list, it was over.I'd never seen any other way that worked out other than just resigning and going to the military.

But for it to happen to a participant from the same team?

'...Let's check first.'

I clicked on the first post. In the meantime, more comments piled up.

[3rd place! Idol Inc. Keun Sejin is accused of bullying] (425)]

: Hold on, hold on, I'm writing this because I feel like I'm going to die if I don't

Participant Lee Sejin of <Re-listed! Idol Inc.>, nicknamed Keun Sejin, bullied people throughout his studies at Cheongsol High School.

I saw articles posted on the internet saying that he looked like a model student running for the student council president election in high school, I was so upset that I couldn't sleep.

Lee Sejin had been drinking and smoking since middle school, and he bullied me by hanging out with a group of people who pretend to be kind.

……

The long writing that followed insisted on Keun Sejin's subtle bullying in school.

The description of the one-on-one bullying was detailed and even included detailed examples.At first glance, it seemed convincing even to me.

‘This not just an aggro rumor that has been used once.’

Whether it was true or not, it was a deliberate post. They even attached a picture at the bottom.

The author’s own high school graduation album.

And it was a picture of Keun Sejin with a cigarette on his finger.

Below the picture, this text was added.

[I have a lot of other pictures. If you understand the situation, resign now. I don’t know about anything else, but I can’t stand a guy like him being an idol.]

‘…Even if it’s not real, once the label is attached, it’s hard to remove, and they even uploaded a photo.’

In an audition program, it was almost a death sentence. And it was huge bad news for the team.

Even if Keun Sejin survived, the team editing was over, and even if he resigned, it would be hell. From the part distribution to the movement, we would have to practice from scratch again.

“…”

I sighed and raised my head.

‘Let’s check first.’

“I just read the article.”

“…”

There was a heavy silence.

Nobody asked what was going on.

‘It seems everyone else saw it too.’

Keun Sejin silently lowered his head down to the smartphone screen.

“Are you sure this picture is you?”

“…I don’t know.”

Keun Sejin muttered in a dazed voice.

“I’ve never taken a picture of anything like this…”

But you can’t say for sure.

I asked again.

“Did you smoke?”

“Wait, when I was a freshman in high school… I did a little… but I stopped right away. And I never did anything like this. Seriously, why would I do this at school…”

Keun Sejin, whose voice was getting louder and louder, closed his mouth as if he was suffocated. Then he lowered his eyes to the smartphone again.

‘You’re reading the comments.’

It was obvious that the comments would be terrible. Gold 1 noticed the situation and quickly stopped him.

“Hey, don’t look at it. Just turn it off. Turn it off.”

“…I have to see it to respond. But… Yes, it’s already over.”

Keun Sejin put down his smartphone. The hand that put it down was trembling.

“Honestly, even I wouldn’t believe myself either. I smoked, but I never took a picture, and if I say that everything except for the cigarettes is a lie… It’s not convincing.”

As he spoke, Keun Sejin was getting calmer. No, rather than calming down… He had resigned.

"…People won't trust me, right?"

"…"

With a picture attached, turning the situation upside down seemed difficult.

Apart from that, Keun Sejin looked upset over being treated unfairly. In addition, the action described in the accusation post was quite different from Keun Sejin's attitude.

'Judging from his personality… Even if he bullies someone, I don't think he's the type who makes them leave a grudge.'

Wouldn't it be possible for him to cleverly manipulate the situation so that they wouldn't even know they were being bullied and made them suffer from their own deeds?

He wasn't the kind of guy that would slander people this way.

But this was also just a guess. We hadn't known each other for a long time, so I couldn't jump to conclusions.Because human beings have many facets.

Aren't there a lot of cases where someone is a trashy condescending boss but is a reliable father to his son?

"…"

After thinking for a while, I turned on the smartphone screen again. And I started to read all the accusations against Keun Sejin from the very beginning.

In the meantime, Keun Sejin and the team members began to struggle with despair and sadness.

Keun Sejin murmured in a low voice.

"I… I will resign tomorrow."

"…!!"

“Hey, wait a minute.”

“C-C-Calm d-down…”

“I’ve done enough already. It’s true that I smoked… If I keep holding on here, I think the controversy will only grow.”

Keun Sejin sounded like he was struggling to keep his voice clear.

“After it subsides a little, I will explain it well, then wouldn’t I be able to debut in a year or so? And it’s a bit… I really don’t remember taking that picture, but it comes out, so it’s a bit scary.”

“…”

Keun Sejin, who always had an inch of leisure left to spare, said that, so the other team members seemed to be unable to be able to say anything.

I replied back, still staring at my phone.

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“…Why?”

“The person who posted this wrote, ‘If you understand the situation, resign now.’ If you resign now, these words will become established facts.“

It was not really my business, but as I continued to answer, Keun Sejin’s anger seemed to rise gradually.

“Stop it. It’ll only make me feel bad. Even if I refute it in this situation, the result is the same.”

“It’s important to have a good rebuttal material.”

“What?”

I picked up my smartphone and turned the screen to Keun Sejin.

On the screen, the last photo included in the accusation post was zoomed in.

“This is photoshopped.”

“…!!”

Your eyes are going to pop out. Stop being surprised.

In fact, if he had thought about it calmly, he would have guessed that it was photoshopped first, but I guess he couldn’t because he was scared.

I handed over my smartphone to Keun Sejin. And I pointed to the obvious part of the picture on the screen with my index finger.

First, the hand holding the cigarette.

“Here, if you zoom in to the design program… The pixel is a bit broken. I guess they lowered the quality on purpose, but some points are still obvious.”

And cigarettes.

“Only the cigarettes don’t fit the brightness. Looking at the exposure value of this photo, it should be brighter than this, but it looks too white, so they lowered it a bit in the process of lowering it.”

It was an easy mistake for a beginner to make when putting a white object in a picture. It was true that white things stood out, but because it looked awkward, they crushed it.

My smartphone’s performance was so poor that it got cut off a bit, but there was no problem with this verification.

‘…I didn’t expect my data adjustment work to benefit me like this.’

I briefly recalled the past when I granted requests like ‘Please erase that damn pattern on my clothes ㅜㅜ’ and received an extra fee.

“H-How do you know this? Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

Keun Sejin looked at the smartphone without saying a word.

Gold 1 shouted at the sight of a glimmer of hope.

“Hey!! Then give them an explanation right now! It’s photoshopped!”

“O-Oh… Yes! You have to upload it…”

“No, wait a minute.”

It seemed because he was a popular guy in real life, he was ignorant of internet physiology. I explained calmly.

“I’ve looked into it too, I’m sure there are some of your fans who recognized that it was photoshopped.”

“Ah!”

“T-Then if you just wait, t-the fans will…”

“No, I mean… It means that even though some parts are obviously photoshopped, they won’t believe it because they have fun cursing at you. They would be sarcastic because this claim comes from people who like Keun Sejin.”

“…Ah.”

Before the atmosphere of the room deteriorated, I added an explanation right away.

“So find it.”

“What?”

“The original picture. If you upload it with the original, they can’t refute that it’s photoshopped.”

Seeing that Keun Sejin in the picture was staring at the lens, it means that he already knew the existence of the camera.

If so, it was highly likely that someone who was an acquaintance took the picture.

'However, it is dangerous to contact your acquaintances in this situation.'

Maybe the person who posted it was his acquaintance.

'Seeing that the person who posted the accusation confidently uploaded this photo, I'm sure not many people have the original photo… '

No, wait. Since it was easy to specify, it seemed unlikely.

'Well, if that's not the case… '

I was deep in thought and asked Keun Sejin.

"When you take pictures with other people, do you tend to save them all?"

"The pictures where I show up, yes."

"Well, first of all… Why don't you look at the album from the day you took a lot of photos for some event or gathering?"

If they changed the background after cropping Keun Sejin from a group photo that had been taken several times, it was understandable that they would be triumphant since he wouldn't be able to find the original photo.

"Moondae, what kind of things did you do before? Are you actually an NIS employee?"

"No way."

Gold 1's nonsense was quickly passed over.

The other team members were already sitting next to Keun Sejin, looking for the picture together with their big eyes.

“Look at the group photos, not the individual photos. Maybe it’s zoomed in.”

“Okay.”

Keun Sejin, who barely returned to his usual tone, quickly opened the gallery with his smartphone.

And the eye-sickening search time continued.

Sejin took so many pictures. The pictures from high school came out endlessly.

Half an hour had passed, but we hadn’t finished the first year yet.

“S-Sejin, you have a lot of friends.”

“…Haha.”

Even Seon Ahyeon sounded fed up as he muttered this. Keun Sejin flipped through the photos with an embarrassed laugh.

And when the picture of the first semester of the second year came out.

“Hyung, this!”

“…!”

Kim Raebin pointed to a picture that passed over his fingers. Keun Sejin quickly checked the picture.

It was a picture of five or six people standing together and smiling at the camera. There were several pictures of different poses, taken in the same place, back and forth.

Keun Sejin was a little far away in the corner. And when I zoomed in on his upper body, I could see it clearly.

It was the photo in the accusation post.

“…Ha.”

Keun Sejin bowed his head and let out a long sigh of relief.

Then he muttered in a somewhat dejected voice.

"…It's a picture from the election campaign."

"Hmm."

Come to think of it, at the beginning of the accusation post, there was something about running for president of the student body. I didn't know who it was, but they must have been a bit of a bother.

'Maybe I should have told him to look for the picture from that time first.'

But we found it anyway, so it's fine.

"Huff…"

Keun Sejin stretched back as if the tension had been relieved. He almost hit his head on the wall behind the bed, but it was clear that he couldn't care about it now.

"Thank God. It's in my photo album."

"Right."

I nodded.

Next to him, Gold 1 spoke vigorously.

"Good! You have an agency, right? Send it to them right away! Ask them to write a rebuttal!"

It was advice that made sense. Since things had already gotten bigger, it would be better to officially respond with evidence.

However, a shaky response came back.

"To my agency?"

Keun Sejin rubbed the back of his neck with a mysterious expression.

“Hm… That’s a bit…”

“…?”

It was supposed to be the agency’s job.

CHAPTER 42

Keun Sejin smiled bitterly.

“My agency… It’s Happy Friend, you know.”

“Ah.”

At that moment, aspiring idols roughly grasped the atmosphere.

And I, who used to sell data, noticed.

‘That place… It’s a place famous for not giving initial responses to controversies.’

Come to think of it, it had already been an hour since the article was posted but the agency hadn’t contacted him in the middle of this mess, and now there was a riot on all SNS. If it had been a small-scale and fast-paced agency, they would have already contacted Keun Sejin.

“Well… Still, I joined because that place released albums well. haha.”

Keun Sejin laughed formally a few times and got up from the bed.

“T-Then, how about asking your friend to p-post it? Y-You have a lot of friends.”

“Hmm… According to the regulations, official Internet activities are prohibited during filming, so let’s ask your acquaintances. If you send them a picture and ask them to upload it, they’ll get excited and know what to do.”

“…”

‘Should I just leave it alone?’

Even now, I was about to regret it because I had meddled too much. But in the end, I gave advice, thinking that I should deal with it until the very end.

“If you personally ask them, they might record it. It’s better to tell the producers and upload it yourself.”

He indirectly said, ‘I think one of your acquaintances is the culprit, so be careful’. Keun Sejin nodded as if he noticed it at once.

“That would be better. Let’s see…”

Keun Sejin opened the notepad app on his smartphone, then smiled at the rest of the team members who were still huddled together.

“Thank you for taking care of me, everyone must be tired. I’ll write it quietly by myself. You should go to bed now.”

“Hey, it’s a bit weird for us to sleep and leave you alone in a situation like this.”

Keun Sejin replied seriously to Gold 1’s worries.

“If we all can’t sleep, aren’t we really going to see hell tomorrow…”

“…”

There was an awful lot of work to do tomorrow.

It was a very convincing statement.

Eventually, all the rest of the team members returned to their beds with haggard faces.

I also lay in bed and fell asleep.

Unfortunately, however, I woke up early in the morning. Because I was thirsty.

‘I talked too much before I went to bed.’

As I got up quietly and headed to the sink, Keun Sejin, who sat at the table and looked at his smartphone, reacted.

“Oh, you’re not sleeping?”

“I’m thirsty.”

“I see.”

Seeing that he hadn’t slept yet, it seemed Keun Sejin hadn’t finished working on the explanation yet. Or he was still rummaging through Internet public opinion.

Neither sign was very good.

“Are you done?”

“Um… I did write it down.”

Keun Sejin looked down at the smartphone with a conflicted expression, then after a little time passed, he spoke.

“I thought if I uploaded it myself, another noisy mess would come out of it.”

“What noisy mess?”

“Well, first of all, they would say that communicating directly on SNS during filming is a privilege… If my explanation sounds stern, they would react like ‘I didn’t know his personality was like that’, and if it sounds compassionate, I think they would say ‘He’s doing this because he got caught’.”

It was a likely scenario.

“So I tried to write it down pretending to be an anonymous acquaintance, do you want to see it?”

Keun Sejin handed over the smartphone.

[This is Keun Sejin’s friend]

: The photo of the accusation posted today is photoshopped. One of the photos I have is the original photo.

(Original picture) (photoshopped picture) The second photo is made by cropping the first photo.

…

"…"

"What do you think?"

What to do with this?

If this were normal academic life, it would be a good explanation. He included everything that needed to be said and he made it easy to understand by adding parentheses.

The problem was that the article was not suitable for Internet anonymous sites.

I unconsciously looked back. The bed was waiting for me.

But if I told him to post this, there was a very high chance that everything we did at midnight would be in vain.

'Ha… '

Sleep… Let's sleep tomorrow.

"…This isn't right."

"What?"

"I said this isn't right."

In the end, I sucked it up and brought out my smartphone.

F*ck, I am the one who does everything in the end

* * *

3:30 in the morning.

It was time for most people to go to bed. At a time when only the most hardcore Internet users were saying useless things at night.

The controversy over Keun Sejin's school bullying was also swept away at once and it was time to come up with sporadic gossip.

At that time, an article was posted on an anonymous site related to an idol.

[I think I found a picture of Keun Sejin]

: (Photoshopped photo) Isn't this the original? (Original photo)

Attached to the article was a group photo of Keun Sejin and other students whose faces were roughly blackened.

It was a light article written with a common IP, but comments from early-morning users who confirmed the contents quickly increased.

– What

– What is it

– Where did you get it?

– Hey, I think this is real;;;;

– Is it a pilgrimage?

– Did they cut out that photo?

– How did you know?

└I found this Keun Sejin's photo on my friend's private account

└Isn't this a stalker;;

└You would have done it too

└ㅋㅋㅋYou hit with facts

└Wow, the little bastard covered their face, are you scared of getting charges ㅋㅋㅋ

The author's feedback fueled the atmosphere of the comment section even more, and soon someone who checked the article made an accurate comparison shot.

– When cropped, it's the same. (Picture)

└Hiii

└ㄷㄷㄷ

└Crazy

– ㅋㅋㅋㅋ It's funny that it's photoshopped, are they such a loser that they have to make that up?

– Wow, I thought Keun Sejin is resigning but he's actually operating the stocks

└Crazyㅋㅋㅋㅋ

└Let's buy it nowㄱㄱ

The comments grew bigger and faster.

It wasn't long before someone discovered that the original photo was taken when Keun Sejin was running for student council president.

– I searched the website of Cheongsol High School and found a similar promotional photo. I think it's during the election campaign. (Link)

└Wow, that's really hot

└They're blatantly against the election in the fake postㅋㅋ

└Wow, the sulky kid must have written that with clenched teeth

└They're caught right now so they're going to lose it

After coming this far, the captures of this article started circulating on social media and in communities.

[Unanswered justice.jpg (feat. Keun Sejin is not a school bully)]

– Keun Sejin's fabricated school bullying photo has surfaced.

– Who found Keun Sejin's original photo?

Just like when the first article was posted, the number of comments increased in an instant.

With the implications that it seemed to be discovered by chance, this article seemed more truthful.

Public opinion quickly turned to ridicule the school bullying accusation.

Keun Sejin's fans, who couldn't sleep, quickly joined the job of uploading the captured copies.

They commented diligently, kicking out people who said 'The photo is a hoax, but the content may be true' and told them to stop the bullshit.

The information that the accusation was fabricated quickly occupied Internet public opinion.

It happened before the end of the day's rush hours.

* * *

"They deleted it."

Keun Sejin murmured.

When it was revealed that the photo was fabricated, public opinion completely turned over and the person who wrote the accusation quietly deleted the article and disappeared.

It would have been difficult if the situation had been messier, but it seemed they had given up because public opinion was totally reversed.

"…I'm glad, really."

With a deep sigh of relief, Keun Sejin hit his head on the table. As the tension eased, he seemed to have been crushed by fatigue.

“Thank you. I am really… ashamed.”

I deserved the gratitude. It wouldn’t have been like this if he had posted the draft as it was.

‘Data seller wins 1… ’

I never thought the time when I was snooping around to see the price flow would be used like this again. This hardship… let’s just say I’ve settled my karma.

“In the first place… If I hadn’t touched a cigarette, this mess wouldn’t have happened.”

Keun Sejin muttered with a sense of shame. He seemed to know it was stupid too.

“Why did you smoke?”

“…Oh, Back then… I was behind the debut team. I even recorded a demo… They made a good debut by adding someone else besides me, and they sold their albums well.”

“…In ‘Happy Friends’?”

They haven’t picked a group of male idols with good grades in the past 5 years, though?

“No, somewhere else… But I don’t plan on joining another team for a while, so I’m here now.”

“Yes.”

At this time, there were only one or two group male idols who debuted three or four years ago and did well on their first album.

And both were from big agencies.

'…Wouldn't it be better to hold on even if you would debut a little late?'

He was 22 years old now after 5 years since he turned 17 years old. It was a good age to debut as the oldest team member. It would have been more reasonable to stick to the formation than to go to Happy Friend.

"…At that time I bragged so much that I'd become a rookie within this year, and got contracted, but… It's already been 4 years since then. Haha."

"…"

So, that's why.

Originally, verbal contracts shouldn't be trusted, but since he was just a high school freshman and his mental state was crushed, I guess he couldn't afford to care.

"As you can see, none of the trainees from Happy Friend's agency can make their debut right away. So I have to make my debut on this program…"

"…"

"That's why I'm saying this, thank you once again for stopping me from leaving. Park Moondae."

This was the first time this guy exposed his inner feelings while blatantly criticizing someone else like this.

'He's sincere in his own way.'

"Okay. Thank you very much."

"…What? Haha!"

Keun Sejin laughed and hit his head on the table. I wanted to laugh, but I guess I was too tired.

I pondered bitterly.

'…Aren't I too relaxed?'

I tried to keep a distance because he was a drug addict, but at some point, I couldn't help it and we became too close.

'Looking at his track record so far, the odds seem low.'

Keun Sejin had most likely resigned and failed to make his debut when the school bullying broke out. Even if he hadn't resigned, it wouldn't have been easy to reverse public opinion like now, so it would have been hard for him to debut.

'Well, child actor Lee Sejin doesn't seem to be in a good state to debut now either.'

Still, Lee Sejin's broadcast volume and image might have been influenced by the variable 'Park Moondae', so it was also a possibility.

'Anyway, this is not an important issue right now.'

Let's just put Schrödinger's drug addict in a box. What is urgent now is the team match stage in two days.

Ta-da! Ba-da!

"Ugh!"

"Uh…"

Just in time, team members woke up from bed at the sound of the morning alarm.

'Another day without a break has begun… '

Standing with heavy eyes, Keun Sejin talked to me again. It seemed to be the continuation of the previous conversation.

"No, really… I'll buy you a meal after this. What do you want to eat?"

"Beef."

"…It doesn't have to be domestic, right?"

“As long as it’s delicious.”

It was exactly 50 hours before the team rehearsal.

* * *

The 3rd team battle stage was held on a large stage that belonged to ‘MusicBomb’, Tnet’s signature music program.

It meant that we should show a great performance on a stage where senior idols had performed, but in fact, I think it was simply because they liked to pick the reaction cuts.

“On this stage, just three days ago! VTIC did a pre-recording!”

“Wooow!”

The participants cheered at the MC’s words.

Actually, the stage sets were completely different, so there was nothing in common except that they had occupied the same space.

However, the participants seemed excited just by sharing the same space as the top idols.

I didn’t feel bad either.

‘VTIC… Those guys are fine.’

It was worth taking pictures of them because their unit prices were expensive.

“Just like the senior idols have done, I hope you show your skills to the fullest!”

After the MC finished the script, the preparations for the rehearsal began in earnest.

“Everyone! The order is the same as the actual show!”

“Yes!”

In an instant, the stage turned chaotic with instructions and the sound of music.

According to the order, the participants still had some time to relax. So the 'Moon Rabbit' team gathered in the corner in the meantime.

"Shall we say fighting before we go? We've worked hard, so as much we've put in our effort, let's show them a wonderful stage."

"Ah, good."

"O-Okay."

The team members nodded their heads with tense faces. However, it was clear that the tension was not from anxiety, but from expectation.

"The <Moon Rabbit> team."

The team members gathered their hands together.

"Fighting!"

The shouts sounded almost aggressive.

'Oh, my God.'

Willingly participated in this even though there were no cameras close by felt unfamiliar to me.

It wasn't a bad feeling though.

"Then let's go!"

Indeed, the stage was right in front of our eyes.

CHAPTER 43

It was crowded outside the stage of MusicBomb where the 3rd team match would be held.

And the majority of the crowd was not the audience, but the people who came to see if they could hear the sound from outside.

A college student who squeezed through the crowd and entered the queue line was dissatisfied with that.

'Why are you gathering together when you can't even come in?'

She didn't understand why they were excited to be here when they couldn't even see them.

'It was the same last time in the second match, but the scale has increased.'

She stood in line, feeling so fed up. Just looking at the length, it looked like it would take forever to enter.

'How annoying.'

Around her people were sharing slogans or snacks. It just so happened that the names written on those slogans were the same.

[Park Moondae ♡ Debut]

'…He's gotten really popular.'

She pouted as she recalled the previous second team match.

She felt bad because the person sitting next to her was Park Moondae's fan, but Kim Raebin, who she liked, even went on the same team as Park Moondae.

'Why do they like that concept bug?'

(TL note: Concept bug = a person who's deeply immersed in a concept character they made themselves. I guess it's similar to chuunibyou.)

She grumbled.

However, she was still in denial that she had gone crazy when the stage in the last team match was over.

…Still, she couldn't laugh at Park Moondae on the Internet anymore.

'…Well, he was okay on stage, so I'm letting it slide.'

She tried to deny it and took her eyes off Park Moondae's slogan. She didn't know who picked it, but the fact that it was pretty made it even more annoying.

"Please keep order!"

"Don't push!"

They lined up according to the number they received in advance and entered inside, but from the middle, there were a lot of people who started running. It was a place where everyone had to stand without a single seat, so the earlier you arrived and took the spots, the more advantageous it was.

She grabbed the fence right in front of the stage.

'I did it!!'

She couldn't help but praise herself for succeeding in applying for an audience for the 18th time.

It was a great achievement because not only there were floods of applicants for the audience, the production team changed the application again on a first-come-first-served basis.

'I'll see him right in front of me.'

Her heart was pounding. However, some time passed, and it was only right before her expectation turned into discomfort that the MC entered.

“Welcome to the 3rd team competition stage of <Re-listed! Idol Inc.>!”

There was an explosive cheer mixed with relief, joy, and irritation at how it was finally starting.

‘Get started already!!’

She chanted inwardly, holding on to the fence.

“The theme of this team match is <Self-Production>! All the elements of the performance, from song selection to stage setting, were selected and created by the participants themselves!”

‘Kim Raebin must have done this well!’

She recalled her own stock, which was the only thing she could do to not start getting political. She cheered like other audiences in excitement.

“Also, by analyzing shareholders’ past buying tendencies with big data algorithms, the participants that shareholders like together have become a team!”

At the MC’s words, the audience murmured all over the place, asking what kind of nonsense he was spouting.

It wasn’t that they didn’t understand his words, but they simply wondered why the production crew had to do such a useless thing instead of getting a separate vote.

Anyway, the MC naturally finished the opening.

“You seem to have high expectations, then right now! The opening stage will be revealed!”

“Wow!”

“The song chosen by the participants is… It is <I Like the Wait> by the sentimental Idol, Maximite!”

The audience immediately turned their attention to the stage.

Eyes full of anticipation turned to the dark stage, wondering if their favorite participant would appear now.

'It's better to come out later… Ah, whatever! Come out right now!'

As if to repay that thought, the light burst from the stage.

Piiing.

'Ugh!'

But it wasn't entirely bright.

Thick yellow beam lights soared from below the stage. The beams of light dizzyingly illuminated the dark stage.

At first glance, there was only a huge wooden stump on the stage.

And the sound of wind instruments ringing.

Whoo-whoo-whoo! Woo-woo-woo-.

It was the sound of daegeum in the beginning of the Korean traditional music Suyeonjangjigok. Elegant sad notes roamed the stage alone.

(TL note: The daegeum is a large bamboo flute, a transverse flute used in traditional Korean music. Sumber: Wiki.)

And a shadow came out of the left corner of the stage.

It was a terrifyingly neat somersault.

The tall man with a wooden rabbit mask ran out and turned around, cutting through the air.

"…!!"

The sound of the daegeum was over.

Following the movement of the shadow who landed on one leg, the robe over his body fluttered, revealing the dress inside.

At that moment, the beams of light that divided the stage completely disappeared.

On the stage which was completely dark, a voice rang instead of the sound of the daegeum.

– *My wait is long*

It's always fun

Without accompaniment or a single note, It sounded perfect, as if it had been recorded.

And now the audience knew whose voice it was.

'Park Moondae… '

The light returned to the stage with a deep drumbeat.

Dung- dungdungdung! dung- dungdungdung!

On the stage, five human shadows, wearing wooden rabbit masks, were standing in a circle.

Behind them, a brilliant Milky Way was revealed as if it were pouring into the background of the black stage.

And a group dance.

Slide.

The movement that started slowly and sensibly started to become more complex and faster as the beat broke.

It was almost like a natural phenomenon.

The speed might change continuously and the timing might not be right, but there was no one who missed the beat or movement.

Following the dance, the outline of the heavy drumbeat became sharp, and the modern baseline was heavily balanced after that.

Then the daegeum and the corrected piano notes began to play on the stairs.

Uhwi- Wiwiwi-

Uhwiuhwi- Wi~~

As soon as the drum sound completely became part of the sound composition, the five of them raised their rabbit masks to the side of their heads in unison in line with the choreography.

At the same time, the person on the far right began to sing. It was Park Moondae.

– On every road, I wait for you

My heart is fluttering

Keun Sejin, who turned completely toward the stage from the far left with the choreography, smiled.

– There is no room for anxiety

Because you already know

Just like martial arts, the formation split and Kim Raebin popped out from behind.

– That you will appear here

We will meet

My heart is sure

Every space is overflowing like this!

'Raebin!!'

The college student holding onto the fence cried inside. She wanted to scream, but somehow she held it in.

And when it came to his rap part, there was something that was clearly noticeable not just to her but also to the majority of the audience.

'You changed all the lyrics to Korean… '

Yes. All English that was mixed with a few words was changed to Korean and matched the atmosphere of the stage.

'As expected, my kid is a genius!'

She cried loudly inside, saying that he had changed it perfectly. She didn't even think of the possibility that it might be the other team members who had changed it.

However, as she was sucked into the stage, the sentiment disappeared behind her head in an instant.

– It's so obvious

I know you.

You'll get to know me

With Gold 1, Ha Iljun's voice backing him, Keun Sejin completed the pre-chorus.

– The answer has already been decided.

An unavoidable fate will come~

Seon Ahyeon came out to the center. The rabbit mask turned in a slightly clunky way and covered his temple.

Still, his face sparkled.

'…He's handsome.'

The college student saw Seon Ahyeon from a close distance and couldn't come up with a negative impression.

Seon Ahyeon started singing while standing up straight and gracefully.

– I like the wait

My wait is long and

It's always fun

'Uh?'

From that chorus, familiar movements began to mix.

It was the hand gestures, the point choreography of the original song.

However, a new foot movement was added offbeat to the hand movement to bring out a strong feeling.

Swish!

The choreography, which used bigger body movements than the original song, was incredibly impressive because it matched the fluttering durumagis.

(TL note: Durumagi is a variety of overcoats in hanbok, the Korean traditional garment.)

'Ah… '

Rather than the emotional and simple feeling of the original song, the stage was completed in a historical drama style with a romantic and overwhelming feeling.

– When this wait is over

I know you who I'll run into

My heart is already bright

Park Moondae sang the high note at the end of the chorus.

Perhaps its color faded during the filming, his hair was now closer to blonde and was swept away by the mask.

'…What's with that hair… It looks fine.'

She struggled to hide her excitement, making excuses saying that it was probably because the stylist put on their life's greatest stage makeup.

And at the end of the note, Park Moondae turned completely backward.

'What's this?'

The audience, who had been focusing on the participants' movements and facial expressions, reflexively turned their gazes back.

A huge dark blue trail was drawn over the starlight that flowed behind the stage.

"…!"

Soon, only strings and wind instruments remained.

With that as the background sound, the dark blue trail drew a huge circle.

The circle, which was completed with traces like an ink painting, as if drawn with ink, soon glowed blue.

Round blue light between the stars. It was the earth seen from the moon.

Uhuuu- Uhuuu- Uhu, Uuu–

Participants gently fall to the floor and rise to the rhythm, naturally taking off their durumagi and throwing them away.

– A light daydream

I'm on my way to meet you

All of a sudden, the participants stood up in full dresses.

Their bodies made a short and intense group dance.

It was a full-body movement that almost looked like a dance, and their bodies curved strongly and smoothly. It felt very strange.

The accompaniment without percussion sounded somewhat sensual.

'Kim Raebin is crazy… '

"Ooh…"

"…"

The college student was startled by the sound of her own voice, but she realized that she could hear it from all directions.

-That you've been waiting for me

Speaking, clear dizziness

By changing the lyric 'déjà vu' to 'dizziness', it sounded more mysterious as if being swallowed.

– Facing the fateful moment

Never hesitate!

Bang!

At that moment, percussion came back into the accompaniment.

The slightly blatant sensuality disappeared in an instant.

– I like the wait

My wait is long and

It's always fun

The chorus came back, and Keun Sejin came out to the center and took the center stage in the complex group dance.

The choreography became more colorful.

– When this wait is over

I know you who I'll run into

My heart is already bright

Then came the low humming.

-Hum hu hu hum- huhu DDu-ru Du-ru Du Du

It was the melody of the chorus.

With the moving choreography, it felt like they were waiting for someone and singing with excitement.

The drumming of the accompaniment sounded like a heartbeat.

The college student belatedly realized that Park Moondae was adding an octave higher to the humming.

She got goosebumps.

'...I thought it was a musical instrument.'

She gulped. On the stage, the intro choreography was once again being transformed.

As the formation constantly changed, the five naturally stood around the only prop on the stage.

'Huh?'

The huge stump of wood.

It was the stump of katsura trees.

Naturally, sitting around the stump, they immediately took off their sheepskin blazers and tossed them down.

"…!"

Revealing a man's jeogori designed like a shirt, Keun Sejin looked straight ahead and smiled.

He turned the rabbit mask back to his face and sang the last verse.

– *Wait for me.*

The stage was finished with the blue light of the earth falling over the moon rabbits who fell asleep leaning on each other while sitting on the stump of the katsura trees.

And there was a cheer loud enough to smash the roof of the filming set.

"Waaaah!"

"Kyaaaa!!"

"Uaaah!"

Under the stage, all kinds of reactions were overflowing, from screaming to covering their mouths.

It was because everyone was excited at the stage they saw that had a superbly high level of perfection, from the opening to the unexpected combination of high-ranking participants.

In addition, there was something about this stage that stimulated the heart of the fans.

Since they couldn't interpret everything at once, they wanted to look at it more than once and find the hidden elements.

There must be many audience members who were already counting the days remaining until the broadcast.

'It's all over.'

The college student who let go of the fence mumbled proudly.She had been screaming and only barely came to her senses when the lights on the stage went out.

Since the opening was cut like this, the next team automatically set up the stage.

After hesitating, she finally admitted her excitement.

'Well, October kids are good, too.'

While muttering, 'You can debut with Ryu Chungwoo and Cha Eugene over there', the irritation she felt when she had first entered already disappeared.

CHAPTER 44

After the performance, the <Moon Rabbit> team returned to the group waiting room for a reaction cut. It was a room where a large monitor was installed to watch other teams' stages.

By the way, as soon as I got off the stage, everyone's eyes were swollen like a crucian carp.

Honestly, it was understandable that they cried. We couldn't rest properly for over ten days, and we finished the preparation with clenched fists. If I were 20 years old, I'd be crying too.

"Hey, how can Moondae not shed a single tear? Are you really from the National Intelligence Service…"

"No."

I stopped Gold 1's attempt to use that topic as a joke. The surrounding team members giggled.

The atmosphere was comfortable.

'I know you did a good job.'

Since there were other teams here, I didn't say it out loud, but the estimate had already been made through the midterm evaluation and rehearsal.

Unless someone from another team suddenly showed off their crazy potential and teleported on stage, this was a winning game.

Thanks to this, our reactions came out especially well whenever other teams showed up on stage.

Because we felt comfortable, we could enjoy other teams' performances without self-interest.

'It's fun.'

I also went back to the audience's position and enjoyed the stages. Of course, I looked around and reacted a bit.

'First of all, the second and the third team are doomed.'

The second team's arrangement was so sudden and they failed to complete the choreography in time, so more than half of the people ruined the dance motions in the second half.

I think the third team wanted to push a sexy concept like Keun Sejin, but it was just too much and didn't make any sense… It was uncomfortable to watch.

'Women would hate it even more.'

The key was how much the broadcast would correct it with editing.

And the fourth team seemed to have recovered enough to come out well.

This team with Gold 2 in it picked a cute and upbeat song andthey didn't make a big difference in the arrangement from the original song, but it matched well.

"Heeseung is good!"

Gold 1 screamed excitedly as Gold 2 came out to the center. I applauded, too.

Now there was only one team left.

It was Ryu Chungwoo's team who had tasted the hellfire.

'Poor fellow.'

If there was someone here who didn't feel sorry for Ryu Chungwoo in this round, that person must have never done a group project.

I could see that the relationship between Lee Sejin and Choi Wongil had become completely twisted. On top of that, he had to finish the performance with the troll and Cha Eugene?

That alone was an achievement to be paid for.

For reference, Cha Eugene was still in a state of low spirits, and he had visited once every two or three days to pick up snacks.

I didn't know if he would use as much energy on stage as the chocolate he put in his mouth, but it didn't matter if he couldn't. It wasn't my team.

"Fighting!"

Keun Sejin, who had been sending encouragement to each team that left the room and went to the stage, also cheered for Ryu Chungwoo's team.

After some time, Ryu Chungwoo appeared on the monitor screen.

"Here we go!"

No matter how ruined the team was, it was still a team full of high-ranked players, so the atmosphere in the waiting room was filled with expectations.

Of course, it could have been an expectation for them to fail.

However, Ryu Chungwoo's team did not fail.

'…Why is that bastard flying around?'

This was because Cha Eugene grabbed them by the collars and dragged them.

Every time he hit the center in the chorus, an optical illusion that the stage was perfect arose.

'That's why you got first place.'

I thought he was totally out of it, but when he went up on stage, he became a different person.

'Is it because of your characteristic?'

I remembered Cha Eugene's characteristics that I checked in the last team match.

[Characteristic: Black hole (A)]

: Immersive stage manpower that sucks everything +150%

Since he had something like this, there was no other choice for him but to debut.

"Ooh!"

When the performance of Ryu Chungwoo team's was over, the participants in the waiting room applauded with admiration.

"C-Cha Eugene is really good."

"That's right."

I could hear the <Moon Rabbit> team gossiping next to me. But their voices weren't filled with anxiety.

No matter how much Cha Eugene flew and crawled around, there was a clear difference in overall entirety.

'The problem is that we were the opening.'

As time went by, the impression was bound to weaken. I wish we hadn't ruined the mini-game that set the stage order.

I didn't know Gold 1 would be thoroughly cleaned out.

At that time, Gold 1's majestic remark when he went to the mini-game as the team's representative came to mind.

– *Just trust me!*

…But this statement didn't come true.

Gold 1, who poured all his energy into the team's rock-paper-scissors, suffered a series of defeats in the following team match.

What if we can't get first place by a narrow margin because of this order?

In fact, the only one who regretted it was Gold 1. This was because the rest of the team were those who would go all the way to the end even if their ranking dropped considerably.

Gold 1's ranking came up short, so winning the team match was important.

Based on their tendency so far, the production team would definitely give something that would help to survive as a winning prize.

'They'll announce it soon.'

Now that the last team stage was over, there was about an hour left until the team match's ranking was announced.

This time too, there was a high probability that they'd leave out the 1st and 2nd places and delay it to the next ranking announcement, but it would be outlined roughly anyway.

And an hour and a half later, the results were exactly as expected.

"Two teams remaining for 1st place candidates! Team Moon Rabbit and Team Husky! Which team will win the final championship?"

That <Husky> was Ryu Chungwoo's team name. So far, the development had been predictable.

"Please check out the results… at the ranking announcement!"

Yeah, I expected that, too.

"But if I do this every time, you'll get tired, right? So I'll announce the benefits of winning this team match now!"

"What?"

That… I didn't know.

"The benefit of winning is… You will definitely survive the next ranking ceremony!"

"…!"

It was way too good There were only 30 people left, so why would they pay with this kind of reward?

As expected, the MC cut the flow.

"However, there is only one person who can benefit from it! Until the next ranking announcement, 1st place candidate teams, please select one participant who will receive the benefit through an internal discussion within the team!"

"…"

For some reason, the production team's ideas were getting more and more bizarre as the program entered the second half.

This… Isn't this a penalty for the rest of us who can't get it?

Even the one who received it would likely get criticized by the fans of the participants from the same team and end up getting cursed at.

As far as I could remember as a civil student, the production team didn't give up on the aggro until the final episode.

Those guys were amazing.

Anyway, it wasn't really a problem with the <Moon Rabbit> team. Because the person who would receive it was already decided.

'It's pragmatic to give it to Gold 1.'

I didn't think the rest of us would be eliminated anyway. Rather than receiving it for no reason and being controversial, I would prefer to give it neatly and take care of our image.

If there was a problem, I was afraid that Seon Ahyeon, who had been criticized on the Internet until just before, would say he wanted to receive it, but due to his personality, it seemed unlikely.

Keun Sejin was in a state where public opinion of him had been reversed due to the rumors of school bullying, so his ranking was easy to guess.

I roughly scanned the expressions of the team members. Glancing at Gold 1, everyone clearly had a similar idea. Gold 1 seemed embarrassed but didn't look like he would refuse. He probably would refuse a few times out of politeness.

'There's no problem here.'

The problem was that team over there.

I could see the production crew waiting with pounding hearts for what kind of mess would hit the <Husky> team.

"Then <Re-listed! Idol Inc.> Let's wrap up the 3rd team match! Dear shareholders, see you at the ranking announcement ceremony-"

The filming ended with participants bowing their heads toward the camera with claps and applause.

"Thank you for your hard work~"

"See you at the next shoot!"

When the voices of the well-mannered participants rang out here and there, The <Moon Rabbit> team, who came out after changing clothes, gathered together again.

And in an instant, the winning compensation was handed over to Gold 1.

"Since we all worked hard, should we give the reward to the oldest member?"

"Yes."

"I agree."

"G-Good!"

"Hey, thank you so much, but let's discuss it a little more…"

Keun Sejin laughed and organized his words.

“Hyung-nim, don’t you know? The more we discuss, the more late it will be for us to sleep…”

“Ah.”

When the tension completely disappeared after the filming, the sleep we couldn’t get for the past 10 days came back rushing in endlessly.

Thanks to this, everyone was talking with their eyes half open.

“O-Okay, thank you, guys. I’ll buy you a meal.”

“Haha. Thank you, hyung! I won’t shamelessly order an expensive menu like beef.”

“…”

I think he was taking a jab at me, but let’s ignore him. Because I’m tired.

Anyway, with such a warm atmosphere, the <Moon Rabbit> team disbanded.

I held back my yawn and searched the navigation to the bus stop with my smartphone.

“M-Moondae.”

“Yes.”

When I turned my head, Seon Ahyeon was clenching his fist. No way, you’re not going to hit me, right?

“What?”

“D-Do you want to go home with me? M-My parents came to pick me up…”

“Oh… yes, thank you.”

Considering the popularity of the program, I thought it would be difficult to get on the bus now, so I was going to call a taxi.

'Thanks to you, I save some money on taxi fare.'

It was a little burdensome to see other participants' parents, but it wasn't a big deal if I could get a ride.

"N-No! D-Don't mention it."

Seon Ahyeon took the lead and walked excitedly, then stopped in front of a black sedan on the road.

It was a foreign car.

'As expected of the person who lives in that house.'

I had guessed it when I saw where Seon Ahyeon lived.

I followed Seon Ahyeon into the car and gave a greeting as politely as I could.

"Hello."

"So you're Park Moondae! Nice to meet you."

"Hurry up and get on~ Did our Ahyeon do well this time too?"

"D-Dad!"

The family atmosphere was more harmonious than expected. When Seon Ahyeon, whose face turned red, became flustered, I could see his parents were pleased.

"Yes, He's done well. You'll be surprised when you watch the show."

"As expected of my son~"

Seon Ahyeon hit his face on the back of the front seat with an embarrassed expression. When he met his family, he seemed more free in expressing himself.

'As expected, the root of all evil is peer relationships.'

I politely gave the address of my apartment and leaned on the backrest, enjoying the trip comfortably. Sometimes I had to answer questions, but it was a comfortable ride.

The strange feeling of seeing a harmonious friend's family was long gone. Thanks to this, I was able to enjoy this comfortable seating.

* * *

"Go home safely~"

"Yes. Thank you."

"I-I'll call you!"

"Okay."

I was able to get off to my address after saying goodbye to Seon Ahyeon's family several times.

'I heard more tmi than I thought… '

I wonder if I need to know that Seon Ahyeon went to Europe to study and learned ballet, but let's think of it as a price for getting a ride.

I walked past the old stairs and corridors and approached the apartment that I had contracted in.

As soon I go in, I will sleep…

"Ah."

F*uck…

The door was open.

CHAPTER 45

"…"

I carefully removed my hand from the handle on the front door of the apartment so as to not make any sound.

I definitely double-locked it before I went out to shoot, but when I come back, all the locks are unlocked?

'It has come to this.'

A problem that comes with fame. The invasion of privacy.

It was an issue I was already worried about. I just left it because I didn't have any other financial measures.

'…First of all, there are no important things inside.'

I didn't buy much and I already brought all my clothes to the filming, so there was nothing valuable in the apartment.

'Then let's go out quietly like this… '

The moment I thought of this, my smartphone rang.

Ring!

[Seon Ahyeon]

When I checked the name on the screen, I realized a problem.

The walls of this apartment were just like paper sheets, so it wasn't soundproof.

*'F*ck.'*

I hastily moved away from the door.

And I ran to the emergency exit right away.

As soon as I turned at the corner in front of the emergency exit and entered the blind spot, I heard the door open.

Screech.

Poking her head out through the door, I saw the back of a woman's head who was looking around and entering.

She looked like a normal person. I'd never seen her before, but the problem was that she was breaking into someone else's house.

I broke out in a cold sweat.

'It's driving me crazy.'

First of all, I went out to the stairs outside the emergency exit and answered the phone.

It was Seon Ahyeon who made the call, appearing on the screen.

– M-Moondae… Have you eaten yet?

"I haven't, but I don't think now is the time for me to eat."

– W-What?

"There's someone breaking into the house."

– H-Huh.

I could hear Seon Ahyeon swallowing his breath behind the phone and his parents' voices asking what was going on.

Originally, I would have roughly hung up on him, but right now it wasn't a situation where I could pretend to be bothered.

‘I’ll have to ask you to give me a ride to the police station.’

If I called 112 and a police car arrived, the neighborhood would become noisy and strange rumors could arise.

It was a last-minute thing, so there was no need to give any excuse.

So, I was thinking of going in person, explaining the situation, and quietly handing it over.

‘I thought it would take forever to call a taxi, but it turned out better.’

– W-Wait. W-We’ll be right there. Come down right away! I-I have to report…

“I’ll go and do it myself. I’m sorry, but can you give me a ride to the police station?”

– O-Of course!

I talked to Seon Ahyeon on the phone and went down the stairs right away.

I thought I was going to go through all sorts of things.

* * *

After that, fortunately, things went smoothly.

Seon Ahyeon and his parents, who were more shocked than me, ran to the police station right away, so I was able to proceed with the report immediately.

– Yes? Ah, the woman…

– I don’t know her.

– Ah, I see.

The police seemed a little unenthusiastic, but they were dispatched anyway.

And here’s what came to light.

‘I didn’t know it wasn’t just one person.’

There were a total of four people in the apartment. They rummaged through the house together and were packing up tableware and clothes.

After several people who had a history of stalking other idols joined forces and followed me, they went past the security and broke into the sloppy apartment.

‘I couldn’t even imagine it.’

I bitterly rubbed my shoulders.

Even worse, the police had been consistent in their attitude that they really didn’t want to arrest them.

‘Was it bad luck to pick this neighborhood?’

The four people who were discovered also smiled as they kept trying to talk to me without showing any signs of nervousness.

– Hey!

– Moondae, can’t you hear me?

– You can hear me. Answer me~

– Park Moondae!

‘They probably will get released with just a warning or a fine.’

If I don’t move out of the apartment, I will be in big trouble.

“M-Moondae. Are you okay?”

“Huh? Ah, I am fine.”

Seon Ahyeon restlessly lifted his chopsticks and put them down. I was embarrassed because we were supposed to be having a meal.

Here's what I heard after the whole affair.

– W-We decided to eat out nearby, so I-I thought it would be nice to eat together…

– Ah, so that's why you called.

– Yes!

Thanks to this, right now I was dining out together with Seon Ahyeon in a restaurant.

'The galbi in this place is good.'

(TL note: Galbi = a type of grilled dish in Korean cuisine and usually made with short beef ribs.)

I silently took the meat to my mouth. Since I couldn't sleep, I should eat well.

"Oh, my God, there are so many weird people these days. How could they do that…"

"Wouldn't it be better to contact your parents first?"

Seon Ahyeon's parents repeated this conversation pattern several times as if they were still shocked.

Hmm. I pondered for a moment, but eventually, I just told the truth.

Today, I received a lot of help in various and they even gave me food, so at least I should show sincerity in answering their question.

"There were some accidents before… My parents are not here."

Gasp. Looking at Seon Ahyeon's father who swallowed his breath, his mother quietly asked.

"Do you have any other adults to contact with?"

"No one in particular… comes to mind."

I didn't know anyone like that because I just came into Park Moondae's body, but there was no sign that 'Park Moondae' had a guardian.

'We're really similar in that aspect.'

Now that I see it, it's kind of interesting. I wondered if the similarity in the background was among the reasons why I entered Park Moondae's body.

But the atmosphere on the table is sinking like a swamp, so let's fix it first.

"It wasn't always like this. It happened because of a number of circumstances… I don't have any particular problem with my living arrangement."

"Is that so?"

"Yes."

Seon Ahyeon's mother smiled instead of making a fuss.

"Yeah. If you live alone, you must have been busy with so many things to do, but thank you for taking good care of our Ahyeon."

"No, I got a lot of help."

"…"

At this point, I thought Seon Ahyeon would jump up and deny it, but he didn't say anything. When I turned around, Seon Ahyeon was turning the meat upside down with his mouth closed.

'Come to think of it, did he know that I don't have parents?'

Now that I thought about it, I only talked to the production team, and it hadn't been aired on TV since then.

He must be quite surprised, but it seemed Seon Ahyeon was trying not to express himself as much as possible.

'I guess you prefer that kind of reaction.'

Now that I looked at it, maybe that was the reason why Ahyeon followed 'Park Moondae' in the early stages of filming.

'Is it because I reacted appropriately to Seon Ahyeon's symptoms in the first ranking evaluation?'

The guess was roughly correct.

'Well, this reasoning is not important.'

I shrugged and picked up more meat. Since I didn't have any other choice, I would spend the day in that apartment and try to find some other place tomorrow.

However, right after the meal, a helping hand was unexpectedly extended to me.

"B-Back there?"

"They've been caught, so at least they won't come today."

"S-Still……"

Seon Ahyeon and his family, who were startled to hear that I was going to return to the apartment, told me I could live in Seon Ahyeon's house until the next filming.

"…?"

I don't know what it's all about, but I won't look a gift horse in the mouth, so let's just shut up and follow.

* * *

Around the time Park Moondae was enjoying the unexpected upgrade of his residence,people who finished watching were frantically releasing spoilers on the internet.

Because the program was so popular, at this point, the ban on disclosure no longer worked.

Individually, it was Cha Eugene who was mentioned a lot, but as a team, the <Moon Rabbit> team was overwhelming.

– Why did you put that in the opening? I felt sorry for the next team

– There's a reason why they're ranked high! They are all so effing handsome

– I bet the internet will flip when they come out on stage ㅋㅋ

– Why is Ahyeon being criticized? He's so damn good

There were a lot of people who tried to suppress the atmosphere somehow, saying that the participants of the <Moon Rabbit> team were manipulating public opinion, but as the audience's confirmation came up one after another, they secretly disappeared leaving behind abusive remarks.

And here, Park Moondae's well-known fan account operator was listless all day because neither she nor her acquaintance won the audience application.

She was the same person who secretly hid a camera during the first team match and settled her heart in Park Moondae.

'Is my network lacking?'

Since he was a survival show participant who had not yet formed a fandom, she refrained from socializing as much as possible with her well-known account, and what came back was a defeat in the information war.

She clicked on the current popular post with trembling hands.

[Went to the audience. (Photo attached) (361)]

: It was my first time doing something like this, so I was excited, but just seeing Moondae's face was worth it ㅠㅠ

Moondae came out in the first team, and he wore a rabbit mask and a hanbok. He looked like a character from a fusion fantasy historical drama. It was so cool that I couldn't stand it… I secretly took photos ㅠㅠ

And the stage broadcast is really bullshit, they're doing far better on stage, my heart is still pounding ㅠㅠ

I don't know what people see when they say that the kids are not good at singing and dancing.

I will write more detailed impressions below!

……

She read the text one by one, and, unable to resist the fact that they had taken a picture, she scrolled down.

Below it was a picture of Park Moondae's upper body wearing a rabbit mask and a durumagi.

"Argh!"

The blonde Park Moondae, wearing a navy blue durumagi against a starry black background, was so handsome it made her heart ache.

'Data… I should buy it.'

She muttered, unable to overcome her sorrow. However, even data sellers usually sell these only after the show was aired because they were afraid of legal problems.

The more she imagined that she could see the trailer of episode 9 at the earliest and episode 10 at the latest, the more her head started spinning.

"…The s, let's see the s…"

She tried to pull herself together by putting on a new draft that would be posted before the last broadcast.

'No, but if we use that picture in this ! It would be nice!'

Then she wailed again and logged on to SNS.

Her routine of searching for audience reviews continued until the trailer of episode 9 was released.

* * *

Living in Seon Ahyeon's house provided a qualitatively different life than living in a one-room apartment.

Of course, there was a problem with the apartment owner and I had to pay compensation for the damaged front door lock.

But that was all. It happened all the time even before I entered Park Moondae's body, so I didn't really feel bitter about it.

The important thing was now I could sleep in a moldless room. Also, the soundproofing was good, so I was able to sleep without earplugs.

However, the pleasure of a noise-free environment was not an advantage I could enjoy today.

"I can't believe you guys were having fun all by yourself!"

Because Keun Sejin came to play.

Keun Sejin, who talked about watching episode 9 together in the same age group chat, rushed forward when he heard that I was being taken care of in Seon Ahyeon's house and broke in this morning.

"W-Welcome!"

Seon Ahyeon just looked happy. Since the landlord was kind, I couldn't say anything.

Keun Sejin entered the living room with a grin and took out the board game he had brought.

…It seemed he really came here to play earnestly.

Ring.

“Park Moondae, aren’t you going to pick up the call?”

“Oh, that’s right.”

I checked the ringing smartphone on the table.

[Kim Raebin: Hello, hyung. Episode 9 is airing today. If you have time, can we watch it together?]

Hmm, we were on the same team anyway, so it should be fine if he joined here.

He could watch quietly, so even if Keun Sejin was here, it would be okay.

“Raebin wants to watch episode 9 together, should I call him?”

“Oh? I agree~”

“G-Great!”

A unanimous agreement came out right away.

Without much thought, I sent a text message to Kim Raebin explaining the situation.

Then after some time, I got a reply.

[Kim Raebin: I… am also with Cha Eugene, is it okay to watch together?]

“…”

Hey, that’s a bit…

CHAPTER 46

In fact, getting stuck with Cha Eugene wouldn't destroy the atmosphere.

However, if Cha Eugene's team fell into hellfire in episode 9, it would be very solemn.

Do we have to put ourselves in such an uncomfortable situation?

I picked up my smartphone and thought about it for a while. To choose an appropriate refusal.

At that moment, Keun Sejin stepped in.

"What is it?"

"Ah, Raebin asked if Cha Eugene could join."

"Hmm… I think it'll be okay, though?"

Keun Sejin smiled.

"There's no way the production team will untangle that team in episode 9, right? It'll appear in the trailer for episode 10!"

"…"

Wow, I didn't think that far.

Besides, I didn't expect him to be so blunt. Since the school bullying controversy, he seemed more outspoken as if a strange trust had arisen.

"It's better to build a friendship with this opportunity~ Oh, right, The landlord's opinion is important! What do you think, Ahyeon?"

"I-I'm fine with it!"

“That’s right!”

Seon Ahyeon calmly shouted yes and concentrated on reading the rules of the board game.

This guy’s personality seemed to have changed a little.

I didn’t expect him to invite an uninformed participant to his house.

“Well… If you say so.”

I’ll just tell them to come.

I reluctantly sent a reply to Kim Raebin.

* * *

It was after lunch that Kim Raebin and Cha Eugene arrived.

“Oh~ Come in!”

Keun Sejin greeted cheerfully.

By the way, Gold 1, who hurriedly joined after Keun Sejin ‘s remarks, ‘Now that this is happening, I should call hyung’, was also sitting in the living room

.

It was true that the picture became weird if Gold 1 was the only one who wasn’t invited among the team members, but Cha Eugene’s presence here was also strange.

“Hello. Nice to meet you.”

Cha Eugene unexpectedly bowed his head and held out the standard plastic bag he was holding. By the way, everything in the bag was snacks.

“I’ve ordered chicken for now, but if there’s anything else you want to eat, let’s order again.”

“Yes.”

Kim Raebin nodded and sat quietly in the corner. It meant he wouldn’t order more.

But Cha Eugene asked with a twinkle in his eye.

“Can we order pizza?”

“Sure!”

“Wow!”

Cha Eugene turned on the delivery app, leaving only exclamations. I thought he would still be in low spirits, but he was still bright all by himself.

Kim Raebin calmly exchanged greetings.

“Did you join in the morning, hyungs?”

“Ah, I did~ Moondae came here way long before me.”

“Yes?”

There was nothing to hide, but it was a bit annoying.

In any case, I couldn’t ignore it, so I explained the great madness that occurred in my apartment.

In the middle, Seon Ahyeon stepped in and supplemented the story.

It was like this.

“…So when I went inside the front door, there were other people.”

“Eeek!”

“N-Not just one, there were three more people!”

"…Well, yes. So it took some time for the police to take them away."

"T-The police were so half-hearted, as if it was nothing… They were too much."

"That too… happened. Yes."

As I repeated this process, the incident became more and more exaggerated and turned into a conspiracy theory.

Thanks to this, the participants who heard the explanation were speechless.

"Wow, it's good that Ahyeon came. It's scary."

"I agree. Hey… I've also had someone visit my house, and I'm worried about that. I have a younger brother at home…"

"Heol, someone came to your house?"

"Yeah. Later, I heard that my brother couldn't go out because they kept ringing the doorbell and sat in front of the house."

"Ugh…"

Those who lived alone or lived in the agency's dorm reported similar experiences.

It was a suitably eerie topic to talk about before watching the shock and horror of <Idol Inc.>

By the time we ate chicken, the story of an acquaintance's idol friend passed by.

"…so when they went in, the lens detector rang 'beep-beep' in the shower…"

"It's crazy."

When chewing on the pizza that had arrived, the rerun of episode 8 of <Idol Inc.> finally began to appear on TV before episode 9.

I watched episode 8 and commented moderately. By the end, even Cha Eugene was caught in the atmosphere.

“Didn’t you feel disappointed for getting 3rd place?”

“It was disappointing, but it was good.”

“Hey, that’s cool.”

“Hehe.”

Cha Eugene grinned at Gold 1’s admiration. It was amazing how messed-up the <Husky> team was that they could make a guy like this lose his spirits.

It wasn’t until the pizza box was emptied that episode 9 began.

[Re-listed! Idol Inc.!]

The logo that I was starting to get tired of appeared, and the first portion that came out was the talent show.

Here, the participants managed to get the portion evenly.

I didn’t know if it was because the content was meant to promote healing or if it was simply an attempt to make up for the hasty poor progress with something heartwarming.

In any case, it mostly showed humorous scenes that saved the characters in moderation. Keun Sejin was a prime example.

The problem was, my portion… It appeared as a joke and ended as a joke.

[At this moment… He dominates the stage!]

[Park Moondae, is he serious about trot?]

They put in captions like this while I was singing.

Since they blatantly made it cringe, it was meant for laughs.

And everyone laughed so hard.

“Kekeke!”

“Pft…”

“You’ve got a lot of good footage that shows your personality. Congratulations, Moondae!”

The last one came from Keun Sejin. I wordlessly hit Keun Sejin on the back while he was drinking soda.

“Cough.”

Would you still want to laugh more?

Park Moondae’s portion didn’t end there.

After the scene where participants jumped out at the kimchi refrigerator and turned into a frenzy, they even inserted an interview as if to seal the deal.

[Q: Do you like trot songs?]

[Park Moondae: Yes.]

After the immediate answer, a cut of me raising my thumb was inserted.

‘That’s an interview where they asked if I liked the team.’

What kind of hoax do these crazy people make every single episode?

The caption was nailing it.

[Trot lover participant Park Moondae, be happy with the kimchi refrigerator!]

I haven’t even received the kimchi refrigerator yet, you bastards.

What made me even more annoyed was that my portion in episode 9 ended with that.

‘You only gave me dirty, useless things.’

If it was the beginning, I would have felt grateful for the positive amount of footage. But not now.

Because it wasn’t a very beneficial edit at the time when the last team match was approaching.

There were few words that were as fatal as the comment ‘He doesn’t look desperate’ in the final survival voting.

And so far, Park Moondae on the broadcast… Honestly, he didn’t seem that desperate.

it was understandable that there were more funny scenes than despairing ones.

So, I worked harder in this team match, but if this trend continued, it was unlikely that my ‘desperation’ would be highlighted.

‘I can’t help it.’

Because I didn’t come out with the decision to make my final debut here in the first place. I’d never shown enough to aim for a cut like that, and the timing to choose had surely passed.

I didn’t have a backstory, so the fans couldn’t create and share a desperate image on their own.

‘That’s kind of funny.’

Actually, I’m the most desperate person out here. I’m probably the only one who dies if I don’t make a debut.

‘I need to prepare my heart a little.’

Even if the ranking suddenly plummets in the last episode, let’s debut. Whoever picked me up, I would definitely be able to debut quickly.

I smacked my lips. For some reason… I was a little disappointed.

'If I am really going to do it, it'd be better to do it with people I am comfortable with.'

Perhaps the majority of the people here would debut. I felt a strange sense of defeat when I thought I might not be able to join them.

Compared to when I first started filming, it seemed I had changed quite a bit, too.

But there was no room for sentiment.

Surprisingly, the production team put the whole collapse of the <Husky> team at the end of episode 9.

[Choi Wongil: So, hyung, you can do this much.]

[Lee Sejin: Isn't what I can do and what I want to do have a completely different meaning?]

[Choi Wongil: Hyung, now is the time to prove your skills. If you think carefully…]

[Ki Jungkyun: Why don't you try it a bit instead of talking like that? Don't regret it later.]

[Lee Sejin:… Stop it.]

The broadcast aired the scene where Lee Sejin's face hardened for several seconds after this conversation.

Then, in a state of complete disarray, they looked at each other as though fists were about to come flying and briefly answered again.

It was obvious that they were conscious of the camera and held back.

This disaster happened when Ryu Chungwoo went to submit a song selection to the production team, so there was no one to intervene.

[Cha Eugene:…]

By the way, Cha Eugene intervened once and was ignored as if he had never said anything.

I guess it was because his remarks didn't fit the mood.

"…"

Cha Eugene looked at the screen with a depressed face, and soon shoved a cup to his face and started drinking soda.

It seemed to me that thanks to him, they passed it well without getting cursed at, but from his perspective, it must have been different.

[Ryu Chungwoo:… What's going on?]

Episode 9 ended with Ryu Chungwoo, who had returned, dismayed by the completely ruined team atmosphere.

[A desperate atmosphere. Will they complete the stage safely?]

"Ah, it's done, right?"

"Yes, you did well."

Keun Sejin clapped appropriately and warmed up the atmosphere. I didn't know why he induced me to respond, but I responded moderately.

Cha Eugene barely took his face off the soda and laughed.

It seems he's addicted to sugar high?

'…Is it my fault?'

I quickly erased the ominous idea.

On the screen, a closing disguised as a commercial break was now appearing.

Looking at the time, the broadcast would probably end with a short trailer or behind-the-scenes cut after the commercial.

"They only showed the preparation process today."

“Right. We didn’t come out much.”

The <Moon Rabbit> team only had a few portions after briefly appearing during the initial formation.

The production team could arbitrarily adjust the order, but since we performed first, I expected our stage to be shown at the end of episode 9, but I didn’t expect them to not show any performances at all.

‘Isn’t this going to lower the ratings?’

As I wondered for a moment, <Idol Inc.> began to appear on the screen again after the commercial break.

The MC appeared on the screen.

“…I don’t feel good.”

“You too? Hey, me too.”

It was never good when the MC appeared alone on the show, so the participants reflexively tensed up and swallowed their saliva.

[<Re-listed! Idol Inc.> Did you enjoy watching it today?]

“No.”

“Nope.”

Weak denial rang out here and there.

It was a small deviation that we couldn’t do during the filming.

[What I’m going to present now is… That’s right, the status of the stocks so far!]

“What?”

“Well, I don’t think it’s going to be this easy… They probably won’t reveal certain rankings…”

[However, only ‘reduced stocks’ will be announced! Which stocks did you sell the most, shareholders?]

“Oh, my God.”

Kim Raebin sighed. It was understandable.

‘What kind of crazy person came up with the idea of only revealing the negative votes?’

Since I already knew about their big aggro, I thought nothing would surprise me.

‘But I didn’t know there would be a surprise like this.’

It was clear that the confidence of not putting the stage in this episode was directed here.

[Now, let’s reveal the sales ranking!]

Along with the MC’s words, the rankings with negative marks on the screen were neatly lined up.

And the living room was engulfed in silence.

Author's Thoughts

I feel the need to give a warning: I am sorry for any grammar mistakes and mistranslations that had occurred before and might occur in the future (:3)∠)

CHAPTER 47

First of all, the first place in the negative vote… it was obvious

[1st place, Choi Wongil]

'He's finished.'

Looking at the editing of episode 9, unless something unusual happened, the next ranking announcement would be the last time I saw him.

The problem was with the 2nd place.

[2nd place, Seon Ahyeon]

This ranking was predictable too. Because the last voting period coincided with the time when the criticism toward Seon Ahyeon was at its peak.

It was a good thing. Unlike Choi Wongil, Seon Ahyeon was suddenly attacked excessively, so sympathy from public opinion was slowly rising.

There was a high possibility that the atmosphere would be completely reversed with people saying, 'Seon Ahyeon isn't so bad that he deserves 2nd place in the negative voting.'

In addition, he was stable because he did well in this team match.

'I am sure you'll be fine in the end.'

However, if I tried to give this analysis to the person who got 2nd place right away, it wouldn't work. Thanks to this, only the sound of the TV was ringing in the living room for a long time.

"…"

*'F*ck, if these guys want to watch the show as a group again, I'm going to cut ties.'*

The atmosphere was excruciating

In addition, if you lowered your gaze a little from 2nd place, 4th place was Lee Sejin B. So, it was Keun Sejin.

It seemed this happened because people had robbed the rest of the votes out of a sense of betrayal on the night of the controversy.

'Since it was settled quickly, a lot of people will be worried and give their votes.'

Sure enough, Keun Sejin was the first to laugh and open his mouth.

"Ah~ When our team match airs, it's going to be flipped over, isn't it?"

"That's right."

"I don't think overturning them will be easy."

"…?"

Kim Raebin, who suddenly opened his mouth, muttered that bullshit seriously.

'Are you crazy?'

Keun Sejin looked at him with eyes that seemed to say that, but Kim Raebin continued to speak firmly.

"We've completed this team match well, so I don't think there will be a significant decline in the number of votes."

"…??"

"…Hey, you… Um, Raebin. You know it's the negative vote, right?"

"Yes… Ah!"

Kim Raebin replied to Gold 1 with clear eyes, then soon spat out an exclamation and added an explanation as if he just realized something.

“Negative votes also tend to increase in proportion to the general vote.”

It was statistically correct except for special cases such as Choi Wongil. It was a matter of the size of the votes of the participants.

“…Huh?”

“That’s true.”

In an instant, the atmosphere became relaxed. Participants who recalled the last ranking announcement ceremony realized that Kim Raebin’s remarks were reasonable.

‘That’s good thinking.’

Although his communication skills were a little weak, he was definitely a useful guy.

Before I knew it, Seon Ahyeon already lowered his nervousness and reacted moderately to Gold 1’s remark.

“Huh, then I’m out, right? I’m in 21st place!”

“Hyung-nim! It’s because you don’t have anti-fans!”

“T-That’s right.”

Instead of watching the TV screen that had already returned to commercials, I checked the ranking again on the Internet.

[8th place Park Moondae ▼ 3]

I was ranked with Cha Eugene in front of me and Ryu Chungwoo in the back.

And compared to the negative votes at the last ranking announcement, the ranking seemed to have gone down by three notches.

‘Should I be happy with this?’

It was difficult to analyze.

In fact, compared to Cha Eugene and Ryu Chungwoo who had never been controversial, there was some gossip about the broadcast's 'Park Moondae'.

So it was ambiguous. Whether this was evidence that the negative public opinion of 'Park Moondae' had finally subsided, or whether the overall number of votes for 'Park Moondae' had decreased overall.

'I hope it's not a downward trend.'

I chose the stage well every time. The number of views and references to fancams continued to increase. The problem was that most of the guys sitting around me also had good indexes.

'…If they picked 13 people, my position would definitely be stable.'

I already knew how many people were selected, so I couldn't run ahead with that positive outlook.

I clicked my tongue and looked at the reaction to this episode. There were no major confrontations because Park Moondae didn't show up much.

It was roughly like this.

– Moondae… you're good at trot? What the hell can't you do?

– (Screaming that he's so cute)

– A puppy whose eyes doubled in size after getting a kimchi refrigerator [Short video]

– Everyone, let's be grateful that Moon Puppy didn't participate in a trot survival show. Just a tiny mistake might have taken him away

A burst of laughter came out. It was a ridiculous idea… It was cute.

'I'll die if I don't become an idol, trot my ass.'

However, as soon as I read the next popular article with a smile, I got goosebumps.

– Isn't this the second time in Park Moondae's life? That's a reasonable doubt

"…"

You got it right.

Anyway, other than that, they were just comments about how they liked the Rabbit class.

And looking a little further under the water,there were also quite a few comments about how they were glad that I didn't join the Puppy class, which was the team Cha Eugene belonged to.

– I wished he had followed his nickname because he was a puppy, but I regret it and already delete my post from 20 minutes ago

– Honestly, I thought they were tinkering with his big data algorithm, but I'm just glad my kid is okay…

– ㅋㅋㅋ I saw the big data uploaded on the website and it was so meticulously cut. Is there a participant that the production team wants to kill in that class?

Overall, the atmosphere of those who liked 'Park Moondae' was like this.

Relief and anticipation for the stage.

It was a bit relaxed as if they already assumed I was going to debut.

It was good that people looked happy, but I was actually less confident than in the first team match. Maybe it was because the final was just around the corner.

'I don't think I'll have a portion in this team match.'

The stage was chosen well. However, no matter how much I thought about it, the majority of the participants in the <Moon Rabbit> team had better storylines than me.

‘I’ve managed this far, I should be satisfied with that.’

From the middle of the broadcast, I was getting cursed at for receiving too much footage.

If only one person in the team comes out like a main character? The number of fans would increase, but that person would easily get antagonized.

The amount of broadcast was limited, so when that person came out, the person they liked wouldn’t come out.

And ‘Park Moondae’ had never failed to get a lot of footage, but he had never devoured it all by himself.

I would just have to be content that they didn’t leave room for nitpicking. I turned off the Internet window with a slight feeling of regret.

And a week later.

It turned out that my regret was as useless as counting chickens before they hatched.

“…??”

Why do I get a lot of footage?

* * *

Park Moondae’s largest anonymous fan community was full of expectations even before episode 10 aired.

This was because there was a cut of Park Moondae’s upper body in the scene of the <Moon Rabbit> team stage, which passed briefly in the trailer.

Everyone was extremely excited about the high-quality hot content that would come out in 10 days.

– Moon Puppy’s face is spinning in the trailer

– Look at this, each of his faces comes out, I'm going to stream the fancam as soon as the broadcast ends. Let's go for 10 million

– Hanbok? Rabbit mask? He must be crazy, how can he pick a good concept in every team match? This one sounds like Moon Puppy's idea too.

└Looking at how he picked the stage, just like a pine tree, he only took concepts that would mess up the fans' hearts

└It's clear that he was born under the stars of idols

└That's right

They were excited and only talked about Park Moondae even after episode 10 started.

For 40 minutes, only teams of other unrelated participants came out, with big news occasionally showing up from time to time.

Then, the portion of the <Moon Rabbit> team began to appear.

– The production crew really put it at the end

– I saw the audience spoiler and they said it was in the opening!! Opening! Why! Here!

– They've taken these kids hostages more than once or twice, I'm getting mad ㅋㅋ

– Moon Puppy is finally coming out ㅜㅜ

People's topic was finally focused on the real-time broadcast.

Moon Rabbit team's song selection process was broadcasted with the atmosphere of a hopeful group project without much modification.

– Moon Puppy: Haha, your opinion is good and his opinion is good. Let's use it all

– Moon Puppy is as smart as ever? ㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– Did you see Moon Puppy's face when Keun Sejin sang the sexy song?ㅋㅋㅋ Now I know why he talked about Tibetan foxes, so cuteㅋㅋㅋㅋ

– There is no need for medicine because everyone is talking calmly and not spouting bullshit

In fact, the broadcast portion of the <Moon Rabbit> team was bound to be heartwarming. This was because there was no particular conflict material to be extracted.

It was thanks to the fact that only participants who had no hard feelings for each other and knew how to save themselves for various reasons gathered.

It would have been a little different if there was a filming in the dormitory on the night of Keun Sejin's school bullying controversy, but there was no data of that day because all the cameras in the dorm were removed due to a device issue.

So the production crew had no choice but to suck it up and send out this image of the <Moon Rabbit> team.

Because it was a storyline that could be a joy to watch in contrast to the <Husky> team's despairing group task.

Thanks to this, fans of the <Moon Rabbit> team participants were able to enjoy watching.

In the production process, the <Moon Rabbit> team was the only team that took care of all the elements step by step.

But it wasn't the only advantage.

As the scene warmed up, the venom went away. And the void was filled with ambiguous sympathy again.

– I've never seen Moon Puppy being this messy

– The kids are familiar with each other, so they look comfortable

– It's so heartwarming

For example, the figure of the <Moon Rabbit> team which was stretched out on a tight schedule came out as if they were close and friendly.

The figures of them not sleeping properly and living like a zombie to meet the deadline were not shown on the broadcast. Because it didn't fit in.

Fortunately, the stage was broadcasted with high perfection.

– They ripped it

– Sexy traditional rabbit and Moon Puppy, how the hell is this combination match so well…

– I heard it through earphones, Moon Puppy put doubling in almost every chorus from the beginning to the end

└Wow, crazy

└Is that possible?

└Even the humming at the end is one octave higher?ㅋㅋㅋ Now if you criticize his skills, you're just confirming that you're a moron

Thanks to the footage of the production process, the fact that viewers could intuitively grasp the various elements of the stage created an unexpected synergy effect.

– Hey, I got goosebumps when Moon Puppy turned around and came out of the earth

– The flow of Hanbok -> Western clothes -> Hanbok was good, I could imagine the Moon Rabbit fell in love with a modern person in the middle.

– It was good to see the katsura tree come out as a stump and the stage end there. It felt a bit lonely and it felt like a long time had passed, so I can only imagine the story

└2D fans will like this performance

.

└I am not cursing at this kind of cheesy comment? It means that the stage is really getting to me

– Moon Puppy, thank you for choosing a legend for every stage, thanks to that, I feel comfortable stanning you

It was a stage that received tremendous response, the fans who were watching naturally poured out comments without trying to force public opinion.

However, the fact that no one received a narrative and the stage ended with the performance of model students left a slight feeling of regret

The image of all the team members, except Park Moondae, crying as soon as they got off the stage was also deleted.

Park Moondae was right in thinking that he wouldn't receive a portion.

Contrary to his prediction that other team members would take the narrative, no one was in the spotlight.

Thanks to this, when the last <Husky> team was aired shortly after, the flood of comments from Park Moondae's fans also quickly became quiet.

– Ah, it was good

– Let's debut like this

– I want to see his face more ㅠㅠ Is his portion over already

– I want them to show more of the kids playing, if the production crew edited it like a documentary, it would be very fun ㅈㅈ

It was at this time that Park Moondae suddenly reappeared on the screen.

CHAPTER 48

The <Husky> team, led by Ryu Chungwoo, practiced in a brutal atmosphere. It was because of the never-ending conflict between the team members.

[Choi Wongil: I didn't know (Lee Sejin hyung) would react so sensitively.]

[Ki Jungkyun: Do you have a victim mentality?]

[Ryu Chungwoo:… Sigh.]

The Interviews and BGM inserted in between created an uncomfortable atmosphere.

The practice didn't stop because none of the participants were unambitious. But it didn't go well.

And instead of the parties involved in the conflict, the production team drove all the growth stories to Cha Eugene, who was alienated from the conflict.

Park Moondae appeared here. To put it bluntly, he had the role of an advisor who helped the main character's growth.

[Park Moondae: Are you having a hard time?]

And several scenes of Park Moondae conversing with Cha Eugene at various places and giving him snacks quickly passed by.

The scenes looked good thanks to Cha Eugene's interview 'Moondae hyung helped me', although he only supplied snacks to end the situation quickly like a mother who gave rice cakes to the tiger.

(TL note: I think it's referring to Korean folklore 'The Sun and the Moon' where a mother fed rice cakes to a tiger in an effort to not get eaten.)

-??

– What's this ㅋㅋ

– You two are close?

Park Moondae's fans were also bewildered because it was an image that they hadn't seen much.

In the previous second team match, he was on the same team as Cha Eugene and made a successful performance together, but there was no personal relationship between them.

Besides, why did he leave behind Ryu Chungwoo, the proven leader, and fled to Park Moondae?

But the doubts quickly faded. Because cute extra content was always welcome.

– He's so good at taking care of food

– As expected, Moon Puppy is a man who is serious about eating

– Moon Puppy: Unexpected healer

– Why do I see my grandmother in a 21-year-old (soon-to-be) idol?

On the screen, Cha Eugene successfully finished the stage by appealing to the viewers with his passion to focus on the stage instead of his existing innocent image.

He might get criticized for eating all the portions alone, but he made a more solid impression. It was a narrative that stuck to inner growth and desperation.

Park Moondae himself cooled down as he watched Cha Eugene taking the amount of portion he wanted to receive, but his fans simply enjoyed seeing Park Moondae's cute and reliable personality come out on the show.

Even the reaction from the general audience was good.

– Park Moondae is more mature than I thought

– There's a reason why he gets along well with his team members.

└Yeah, my first impression of him was~ He looked rude, so this is unexpected

Cha Eugene took away all of the agro because the cut appeared as a side note of Cha Eugene, who blatantly took all the portion.

For Park Moondae, only a good image remained.

Thanks to this, the day after the 10th episode aired, Park Moondae, who was browsing the Internet, felt complicated and odd. Because it sounded as if it was enough.

'It's good to continuously recover the initial image. But… I didn't catch the desperation either.'

He needed the image that Cha Eugene showed. However, the only stage left was the final.

And there was no reason for the production team to give a narrative to Park Moondae in the final.

Until now, the broadcast only gave him personalities that would make the show fun.

'Should I give up?'

Park Moondae clicked his tongue and organized the upcoming filming schedule in his head.

Then, all of a sudden, he discovered an event that was going to happen right after the filming.

'Wait, even with that… Is it possible?'

Of course, the broadcast was entirely up to the editing of the production team. However, trying to make a cut that could be used as content might be worth it.

Park Moondae made up his mind.

‘There’s no harm in trying.’

By the way, Seon Ahyeon was trying to ask him to eat jjimdak together, but he didn’t notice that he secretly lowered his smartphone when he saw him lost in thought.

(TL note: jjimdak = Korean braised chicken.)

* * *

“Wow, it’s a little hot now.”

As he entered the set, Keun Sejin muttered.

It was already the end of April. The first shooting began in the winter, but time passed by so quickly.

‘I’ve totally adjusted.’

Thinking bitterly, I moved Park Moondae’s body, which was no longer unfamiliar, and changed into a uniform.

Then, Keun Sejin, who glanced over here, talked to me.

“Oh, it seems you’ve grown tall?”

“What?”

“You must have been working out hard. You’ve also bulked up a bit.”

Those words gave me a fresh realization.

Over the past few months, I had grown quite a bit in height and gained muscle moderately, so there was almost no difference in size between this body and my original body.

“I’ve heard people say that you can grow taller even if you’re over 21, but it’s the first time I’ve actually seen it.”

“It’s the first time for me too.”

“Aigoo~ Sure.”

I shrugged my shoulder.

‘It’s about 177.’

I sat in the waiting area of the filming set, recalling the height I measured a few days ago. It was rather awkward that there were no unfamiliar faces around anymore.

“Hello, Moondae~”

“Hyung, hello!”

‘Even if I go back to my original body, I need a period of adjustment.’

It was frustrating. I took out my smartphone, roughly returning the greeting.

I had to return it soon, so I was going to turn it off in advance.

However, a new alarm popped up on the smartphone. It came from an anonymous SNS account for public opinion searches.

I clicked on it reflexively and saw an article that had just been shared by 10,000 people.

[Original singer of the trot song sung by Moondae made a post on SNSㅋㅋ (link)]

It’s not uncommon.

As the program became overheated, celebrities who weren’t involved were also mentioning the participants

When I moved to the link, a photo of the trot singer’s face smiling broadly and raising a finger heart appeared on SNS.

In the background, there was a TV screen showing ‘Park Moondae’ singing a trot song.

[Participant Park Moondae of <Idol Inc.> who beautifully sang my song! I’m rooting for you^^ I hope you debut! #IdolInc #Let’sDuet #TrotCoolGuy]

“…”

Well… it was good that the original singer was satisfied. The fans seemed to be having fun, too.

With that in mind, it was time to turn the page. Another post by the trot singer flashed across the screen. This time, I posted a bigger picture.

‘Wait.’

It was a picture that I had taken.

When I checked again, it was indeed the photo that I took from an event a few years ago.

It wasn’t sold, so I released it on a fan site out of my conscience. The natural light was good that day and the quality of the photo was good, so I wanted to post it on SNS.

But I felt a bit uncomfortable. As I turned off my smartphone, I realized why.

‘Am I not here right now?’

Certainly, as soon as I entered Park Moondae’s body, I tracked my original body’s whereabouts. But information about my original body didn’t exist.

And yet the picture I took is still there?

‘That’s weird.’

I went straight to WeTube and clicked the search bar. And I searched for the most famous fancam I’d ever taken.

[Youngrin's legendary fancam]

It was a fancam of judge Youngrin who passionately completed the stage in heavy rain at the time when she was still unknown. This stage laid the foundation for Youngrin's fame.

Then a familiar thumbnail appeared at the top of WeTube.

'There it is.'

The video was there.

Of course, it wasn't my original account.

The account I used to post unsold data was deleted when I started taking the civil exam. So… It was around last year at this time.

The uploader's comment was pinned at the top of the video comment window.

– The original has been deleted and uploaded. If they sign up, I will erase it.

"…"

It was almost certain.

'I don't exist, but the data I took is still there.'

It was kind of creepy. The fact that I would die if I didn't become an idol within a short period of time made it even creepier.

'Is it my karma for selling data?'

I half-jokingly thought so, but it didn't seem like a joke now.

'What the hell are you?'

I turned on the status window and asked, but there was no answer. I felt stupid.

What the hell is the purpose of this bastard?

“Hey, what are you doing?”

“Wait, I am thinking.”

First of all, I quickly got out of my mind. Although I unexpectedly found a contradiction, right now, the filming was right in front of me.

‘So once I’m done, I’ll find out more.’

I immediately finished thinking and returned my smartphone.

If I uselessly got distracted by something else, I would only become prey to poor attitude scandal. I had to clear my head.

Fortunately, no effort was required.As soon as filming started, the MC took the situation out of the way.

“<Re-listed! Idol Inc.> Welcome to the long-awaited 3rd ranking announcement ceremony~“

After participants applauded, now became an expert at it after several months of filming, we went straight to the point.

“But before we get to your ranking, one thing! There is one thing we need to find out first. It’s your sincerity.”

‘That’ content came right away. I guessed the MC’s next words.

‘They will see how serious we are about this audition. With <Casting Call>.’

Yes. At this point in time, <Idol Inc.> series traditionally added another stimulating content.

It was called ‘Casting Call’.

In short, it was a content where Tnet and a moderately reputable agency came to cast the participants.

However, if you chose an agency, you had to get off the program.

Therefore, participants who had done noticeably well in the program so far would rarely deviate.

Participants were not stupid, they could debut as a group with guaranteed recognition right here so there was no reason to go to an ambiguous agency.

In the end, it was just an event that added tension to the program, because there was no escape for people who deserved to debut here.

'But I can take advantage of that tension.'

So, I would encourage conversation as much as possible and appeal to the program just how serious 'Park Moondae' was.

…Of course, there was a higher chance of getting cut off in the editing.

"…Gulp."

I heard a gulping sound from next to me. Most of them seemed to have guessed <Casting Call> from the timing and MC's words.

And if they were in the middle or lower ranks at the last ranking announcement ceremony, it was a moment that could be conflicting enough.

Since the probability of debuting here was low, they would want to grab another rope.

It was an image of measuring how to escape, they would be able to cover it to a certain extent by saying 'I want to start a new challenge because the agency recommended to me has been my Wannabe for a long time. I'll show you better growth in the future.'

'In fact, there have been a consistent steady number of breakaways from the lower ranks.'

Last season, there were about five people who were openly carried away. Considering that the broadcast ended early shortly after, it was a very wise loss. Only their debut ranking went down the drain.

MC paused until the participants were out of breath, then opened his mouth.

“Right away~”

The large screen at the front lit up.

‘Is there a list of agencies?’

By the time there were murmurs about the ‘Casting Call’, the MC spread his arms wide and continued.

“Personality test!”

“?!?”

“Through the personality type test we have prepared in advance, we will match the KPOP concept that is perfect for you~”

Participants relaxed around me and the words ‘Wow… ’ rang out.

“…”

I bitterly cooled down.

‘Is it just entertainment content?’

Or they could decide on the next team match based on that data.

Anyway, one thing was for sure… I was tricked.

‘Damn it.’

Participants followed the staff’s lead and moved to a small room with ten people each.

It was good that I didn’t have to wait because the order was based on names, but the reality check left a bad aftertaste.

‘I count the chicken for nothing.’

The room I entered was a renovated one-person practice booth, with a camera installed in the middle of a small desk for two people.

It was a space for a typical one-angle cut.

Suppressing a sigh, I went to the opposite side and sat down at the desk. A question-and-answer table was displayed on a tablet that was set in advance.

The popular SNS sensible design already lowered its credibility.

'It looks like a form that floats around on the Internet.'

Guessing that maybe it was outsourced in a hurry, I chose a multiple-choice question.

CHAPTER 49

The personality-type questions and answers displayed on the tablet were mainly like this. To explain the situation and choose an action.

Of course, they were all special idol situations.

[1. You have been selected as a performer of TaKon, a world-class K-pop concert presented for global fans in 21 countries.

While practicing with blood and tears, You suddenly have an entirely new idea!

However, there is only one week left until the performance. What choice will you pick?]

For now, let's ignore the indirect s for their concerts that are blatantly inserted.

If I removed that… The question was whether or not I would want to drop what I was doing and do it all over again with the deadline right around the corner.

"Of course, I wouldn't… '

Do you think this is some kind of school assignment?

If there is only a week left, everything from the stage set to the costumes would have been almost fixed, but now that you have an idea, you want to change everything?

'In the first place, in order to do it all over again… I think it'll take more than five years.'

This meant that it was an impossible situation.

Even if I wanted to show my desperation, this wasn't passion, it was arrogance.

[⑤Unfortunately, there's not much time left. Let's finish the preparations we've been doing perfectly.]

I chose this option after pretending to think hard about it. And at the same time, I muttered to the camera so that they couldn't edit it.

"If I was doing it alone, I would want to give it a try… The stage is a comprehensive art, so I think we should consider the situation. I'll put the good ideas together and write them down right away."

With this much seasoning, making a weird personality from this would be difficult. I moved on to the next question.

[2. You have won the Rookie of the Year award at ToneA, the largest music award in Asia. But on the way to the awards ceremony, a member is seriously injured in a car accident.

Fortunately, you only have minor bruises. If you leave right away, you will be able to attend the awards ceremony. What choice will you pick?]

"…"

Of course, you should fu*cking rest your body.

Right now, one of the passengers is seriously injured, so how can you trust you're not bruised enough to go to the awards ceremony?

However, no matter how I looked at it, the option to go to the award ceremony with determination and hard work would look good.

'It sucks.'

I chose the neutral answer, suppressing my wiggling eyebrows.

[④ Find out how to deliver my acceptance speech remotely at the hospital.]

"It would be better to go in person, but the aftereffects of the traffic accident may not be immediately apparent. I think there will be no disruption to my activities if I check my physical condition through checkups."

Even with an ambiguous explanation attached, it was absurd.

'Is it going continue like this?'

Yeah, it really continued like this.

Surprisingly, all 10 questions and answers assumed similar ridiculous situations.

Only the production team would know what the hell this had to do with my KPOP concept.

I sighed and solved the rest of the problem.

After passing through question 9 about advertising (which secretly mentioned the company's products), the last question finally appeared.

It was finally over. I quickly skimmed through question 10.

[10. You appear in <Re-listed! Idol Inc.>, which selects global K-pop idols who will be active worldwide.Through endless efforts, you are finally standing in front of the last gate. An incredible casting call is calling you. What choice will you pick?]

"…"

They put this here?

As soon as I realized that I was double-tricked, the tablet screen changed.

It started counting down from 3.

'How can those bastards only give three seconds for the countdown?'

I felt their firm determination to pick a surprised participant's reaction.

In an instant, the number disappeared. And before I could think of anything else, a phrase popped up right away.

[Choose now!]

At that moment, the front door burst open without warning.

"…!"

"Hello?"

Outside the door stood a familiar face.

Wait, let me correct it. It was a face one-sidedly familiar to me.

Because… I'd taken a lot of pictures.

"Nice to meet you."

A member of VTIC opened the door with a smile and came in.

"…!"

It was the appearance of an unimaginable tycoon.

I bowed my head reflexively. If my greeting was just a little late, the internet would twist my leg.

(TL note: leg-twisting was a form of punishment/torture in Joseon Dynasty.)

"Ah, I'm enjoying the show."

"Thank you."

The VTIC member extended his hand and asked for a handshake. I reached out and shook his hand as if I was meeting the boss of a business partner.

A cold sweat ran down my back.

'How the hell did they recruit him?'

Even if <Idol Inc.> was successful, they didn't have an investment stake in VTIC's management company, so how did they make him appear?

Is VTIC hosting an exclusive reality show on Tnet? Did they catch s for T1 affiliates?

'...No, that doesn't matter.'

The important thing was to be careful with my words. I didn't know what kind of captured images would go around on SNS if I made a single mistake.

After confirming that the VTIC member was seated, I sat down again. Then I calmly checked the opponent.

'Was he the leader?'

I remembered the fame and the popularity scale, but I didn't remember much of the other positions.

First of all, I only remembered that the individual indexes were good within that team, and the demand for fancams was good because they danced well.

His stage name was Cheongryeo.

"First, let me introduce myself. I'm Cheongryeo who plays the role of leader in VTIC."

It seemed his real name was different, but of course, I didn't know.

Anyway, he didn't seem to think that 'Park Moondae' wouldn't know him either. He just introduced himself once.

"My name is Park Moondae. I look forward to your kind cooperation."

I didn't know what to look forward to, but I greeted him politely.

'Should I have been more surprised and made a fuss?'

I was rather flustered and forgot to react.

"I saw it on TV, but you really are a calm person."

"…I was so surprised that I stiffened."

"Haha, is that so?"

Does that mean you don't believe me right now?

Cheongryeo laughed just enough to lighten the mood and went straight to the point.

"The reason why I came to meet participant Park Moondae today is… It's to deliver a casting call from LeTi, as a member of VTIC."

I expected that remark to come out. But I couldn't help but think.

'Is the production crew crazy?'

With LeTi's current worth, even a single-digit rank participant would be able to escape.

Of course, there was no guarantee that I would be able to debut as the next male idol just by entering there. The trainees that the agency already had couldn't be just one or two.

However, the current status of VTIC was so high that it was perfect for children around the age of 20 to chase it. A VTIC member even came here.

'Even those who already have an agency would close their eyes and sign it.'

Cheongryeo continued saying words that sounded like they had been prepared in advance.

"Of course, it's not an offer for all participants. Do you remember the questions and answers you solved earlier?

"Yes…"

"In the 9 situational questions and answers, Park Moondae is the participant with the highest response rate with our VTIC members."

Cheongryeo lightly clapped his palms.

“You can say that you share a similar talent image with the artists of our LeTi agency.”

“…Thank you.”

Then it meant that people from different agencies went into different rooms and were conducting casting calls.

‘Picking the cuts for the trailer will be easy.’

Seeing that even VTIC came out, they must have raked all the famous agencies that were close to Tnet, viewers would be having so much fun.

“First of all, I’ll tell you the benefits of choosing LeTi agency.”

The words that followed were obvious. It was a rough recitation of their welfare, achievements, and vision.

‘Is it to take care of the agency’s image?’

It was amazing that he memorized it. As a leader, he must have already comprehended it for external use.

Anyway, I nodded my head sincerely and made an exclamation as if I were listening to a very impressive story.

Cheongryeo finished the story at the right level and added humor as if he had prepared it.

“And as participant Park Moondae already knows, LeTi is also the agency of senior MallangDalkom. Well… Wouldn’t there be a chance to dance to <POP☆CON> together?”

“Haha… Yes.”

I don’t think this damn haunting popcorn will ever go away.

In any case, maybe he thought I was tempted, Cheongryeo smiled brightly.

“Well, then.”

Papers and pens came up on the desk.

It was a contract. Looking at the stamp and the form, it seemed real.

‘Really?’

Do you need to be this serious with the directing? I skimmed through the contract nervously.

“Park Moondae, will you respond to the casting call of LeTi, VTIC’s agency?”

“…”

Let’s think.

I was in the first group with 10 people. There were 30 people left. 3 groups.

‘Then at least two more people will receive casting calls from LeTi.’

What if there are more than two VTIC members here?

Then up to six people, including me, would receive this casting call.

Let’s say one more person other than me said okay.

LeTi was not a fool, if two or more people escaped and went to that agency, there was a high probability that they would tie them together once or twice to promote them.

<Idol Inc.> wasn’t just successful, it was almost a syndrome now.

‘The agency can’t just throw away this fame.’

So if I didn’t want to continue to be an idol with the body of ‘Park Moondae’ this might be a better option.

Because there was a high probability that I would only be active for a year and then fade away.

'After that, I'll find clues to return to my original body… I can look for a new career path.'

If I stopped my activities, I would soon be forgotten. There were dozens of new idol groups that make their debut every year.

I lifted the pen over the contract.

"…"

Then, I quietly put down the pen and bowed deeply.

"I'm sorry… I want to keep trying."

"Ah…"

Cheongryeo responded as if it were a pity. His fan service was good on the stage, but he also had a good personality in front of the camera.

"It's a shame. Participant Park Moondae, I thought you would do well at LeTi."

"You're flattering me."

I bowed politely once again.

"Is there a reason?"

Why did I refuse?

First of all… It was because I would be in big trouble if I were the only one who said okay.

They wouldn't let me do solo activities.

Even VTIC only did unit activities at best. They probably thought solo activities cut down the group's lifespan.

And… Before I came into this body, three years later, LeTi's rookie male idol never made their debut.

In other words, my sudden death would be confirmed.

'Absolutely not.'

Waiting to debut at LeTi was crazy, I'd rather leave the program. I was getting cold feet.

But I couldn't say it like that, so I had to answer using another reason.

"Well, there's an investment cost."

"What?"

"There are people who have bought stocks for my debut so far, so I want to return that investment."

That's right.

'…If I am going to be an idol, it's better to do it properly.'

When I made my debut in <Idol Inc.>, I would sign a five-year contract with a T1 label affiliate.

Then at least Park Moondae would be active enough to satisfy those who spent money and time on his debut.

…Well, it was from my standpoint. It wasn't like I had any other dream or vision.

What people like… I enjoyed it too.

'Is it unexpectedly suitable for me?'

The stage was fun, too.

"I'm going to try harder to make my debut here."

This much answer should be fine.

VTIC came out of nowhere, so I couldn't find the right time to show my desperation, but I wouldn't throw it away.

Cheongryeo listened to my answer and nodded.

CHAPTER 50

"All right. I'll be rooting for you, participant Park Moondae."

"Thank you."

Cheongryeo accepted the rejection neatly without saying anything more.

I wanted to proceed according to the plan of drawing more conversations and picking out desperate cuts, but that kind of scenario wouldn't work with such a viable opponent.

'First of all, their value is too big.'

Since they were the last year's grand prize winner, there was a big difference. Rather, there was a high possibility that 'Park Moondae' would only look pathetic.

"Then I'll destroy this contract."

Cheongryeo picked up the contract, held it clearly to the camera, and tore it in two.

'It's a performance.'

Perhaps he'd been told to act like that in advance.

"You had a hard time making a difficult decision. I wish you the best in the future."

"Thank you. Cheongryeo sunbae-nim, I hope you finish your activities well, too."

We shook hands and bowed, roughly matching the atmosphere.

"Ah, did you see our promotion this time?"

"Yes? Yes."

Shouldn't we end the shoot now?

I didn't know why, but the conversation continued. Let's respond sincerely.

"I really enjoy listening to the album."

"Wow~ What's your favorite song?"

Is this bastard doing this on purpose? Don't tell me he's being like this just because I refused.

"Um, I especially like 'Starlight'."

I picked out a song in moderation. Actually, I didn't have time to listen to it, but I saw it in a fan post shared on SNS while searching for 'Park Moondae'.

"Ah, I wrote that."

Cheongryeo happily pointed to himself.

'Cheongryeo is frugal in PR, too.'

They were already so popular that they couldn't get any better than this. He really was like an idol that had a lot of free time.

"Aha, you deliberately said that because I am here."

I just laughed. If I said no, it would be strange, and if I said yes, it would be strange too, so there was nothing else I could do.

Cheongryeo smiled facing me, then as if he suddenly remembered something, he went out of the door.

'What is it?'

Cheongryeo came back with an envelope in hand.

"It's nothing much, but I brought red ginseng for you to eat and be strong."

“Ah, thank you.”

It was definitely a PPL, given that the brand logo written in gold on the red envelope was clearly visible.

‘Anyway, red ginseng is welcome.’

As soon as I accepted it, Cheongryeo gave another final greeting.

“Then fighting!”

“Yes, fighting.”

The shooting ended with us smiling at each other.

Immediately, the staff came in and began to take care of Cheongryeo.

Some adjusted the camera and touched the tablet PC, but it was clear that a majority of them were attached to Cheongryeo. They were probably from the VTIC side.

‘How faithful.’

No matter how much it cost, people was like that.

After confirming that the staff had collected the microphones attached to his clothes, Cheongryeo spoke quietly.

“Moondae-ssi.”

“Yes.”

Unlike before, he had no smile on his face.

That didn’t mean that his face hardened, it was just a natural expression of a person speaking.

“As I already said with my own mouth, LeTi is a good agency. Their settlement is good. Contact me if the situation demands it after the program is over.“

"…!"

He meant that I should contact him if I was eliminated.

'Are you serious?'

Why are you recruiting trainees here, when you're not even an executive of your agency?

'Ah, do you have company shares?'

That made sense.

I didn't know why he was doing this to Park Moondae, but… Their debut group probably didn't have a suitable main vocalist.

I nodded without saying a word.

"Yes, thank you."

"Don't mention it."

The conversation ended there. I naturally left the room and moved to the waiting room following the staff's guidance.

Perhaps in order to avoid spoilers leaking, I was isolated from the participants who had not yet taken the surprise personality test.

"Hyung!"

As soon as I entered, Kim Raebin, who was already seated first, talked to me.

"Where did you get the offer from?"

"It was LeTi."

"I got LeTi, too!"

As expected, more VTIC members came.

Kim Raebin was uncharacteristically excited and told the story of meeting VTIC. As I nodded and listened, Ryu Chungwoo, who came in with a tired face, acted interested.

"Ah, you guys finished first."

Just looking at his face, it was clear that Ryu Chungwoo had a mental conflict.

'Maybe he got VTIC too.'

3/10 was a very generous probability.

A familiar-looking participant came in from the side.

"Hyung-nim! Where did you get the casting call?"

"I… Wonder Hall."

It was T-Holik's agency. It was a large agency famous for selecting long-time idols.

'That one is good too.'

I heard the guy who asked let out an admiring sound. However, Ryu Chungwoo quickly sat down with a smile on his face.

'That's unexpected.'

It was a bit strange that he was thinking of breaking out even though his debut was almost certain, but he must have had his reasons.

Participants returned to the waiting room one after another. Soon, all 10 first batters gathered.

'Everyone on the first round turned it down.'

To be honest, I thought one or two of the lower ranks would escape, so this was unexpected. Because the lineup of the agency was so much better than I thought.

Everyone from the second round returned to the waiting room. At this point, there were a number of people who looked proud and had a strange sense of resonance.

“T-They seemed like a good person.”

Seon Ahyeon, who returned late, muttered with a bright face. It seemed a solo artist had kindly given him words of encouragement.

“But you refused.”

Seon Ahyeon jumped at the words thrown as a joke. Seon Ahyeon muttered with a shocked face.

“O-Of course I have to do it until the end…! If I go there… We can’t debut together…”

“…”

It seemed that Seon Ahyeon was extremely immersed in the positive peer relationship he was experiencing for the first time.

‘If the deal was a little better, everyone else would have jumped on it.’

I looked at him a little pitifully, and just nodded my head.

“You’re right.”

“Y-Yes!”

Seon Ahyeon energetically affirmed. Kim Raebin was looking at Seon Ahyeon from the side with an expression of looking at something strange.

The third group slowly began returning to the mysterious situation.

“Letty, I am sorry~ What a waste!”

Keun Sejin, who came back first, smiled and said this as soon as he sat down.

So this guy got an offer from LeTi too.

'Kim Raebin, Keun Sejin, and me.'

It might be a coincidence, but it was quite interesting to see the tendencies of the agency.

And Keun Sejin's words were even funnier. What do you mean it's a waste?

'You said something you don't mean.'

It seemed his goal was to debut as soon as possible, but there was no way that such a reasonable guy would go to LeTi.

However, Keun Sejin murmured quietly after confirming that there was no microphone and that the camera was not running.

"Ah~ Should I have transferred? It's a pity."

"…"

I guess you're more concerned about it than I thought?

It seemed that those words came out spontaneously because his agency was not reliable in the past.

In fact, it was also a rare opportunity. In this industry, it was actually impossible to change to a better agency without completing the contract period.

Receiving the transfer of the trainees who finally debuted in <Idol Inc.> was in fact a tyrannical act of a large broadcasting company.

In other words, those guys were thugs.

The agencies grinned and bear it because they were just trainees who were eliminated from the debut group anyway, so it was as if they were being sent to the broadcast just to be recycled.

'It serves as a lubricant for the relationship with the broadcasting station.'

But since this season had been going well, there seemed to be a subtle pressure.

The pressure to voluntarily drop out and remain in the agency.

I remembered the words I heard from Keun Sejin during the filming break.

– Yeah, I've been hearing that kind of stuff lately. 'Wouldn't it be better to debut together with the dongsaengs that you've been practicing with?'…People are really funny, aren't they?

It wasn't like they tempted him with benefits, there was no way anyone would like that.

"Just kidding. I am going to debut here~"

Keun Sejin laughed with his shoulders shaking, but it was clear it wasn't a joke, he was really worried.

'Surprisingly, there are a lot of people in the upper ranks who were swayed.'

I shrugged my shoulders. Does anyone plan to leave and reduce the competition?

But unfortunately, that didn't happen.

Only one of the lower ranks escaped.

"In response to a casting call from agency Traveler, participant Choi Wongil will leave <Idol Inc.> from today onwards."

I was amazed.

'You got the right angle.'

It was obvious that he was quickly managing the damage control after seeing the public opinion.

Maybe because he was young, he was unable to control his emotions, but it seemed he used his brain a bit so he probably left without a smile.

“O-Our agency?”

I heard Gold 1 mutter in bewilderment behind me.

‘Ah, he belongs to Traveler.’

I heard that he had difficulty rejecting the offer from T-Holic’s agency. I guess he had some attachment to his original agency.

‘I think he has the guts to keep going.’

Anyway, that concluded the <Casting Call> event.

I felt a little bitter that I couldn’t achieve my goal, but I secured my portion.

‘They’re not going to cut off the VTIC footage.’

There was no way that they were able to hire them and just let them go.

After taking a few cuts of the trainees’ reactions to Choi Wongil’s departure, the production team immediately began preparing for the ranking announcement.

Thanks to this, participants sat in the seats where they were seated before the <Casting Call> event started and endured a boring waiting time.

But this time, since they had flashy conversation material, everyone seemed to be busy talking.

“Oh, that agency?”

“Awesome.”

“Wow… How does Cheongryeo-nim look in person?”

Even the tension that was usually felt before the ranking announcement ceremony was lowered.

“Hu~The lineup was no joke. There must have been a lot of conflicted people.”

Keun Sejin whistled and listed off the name of the agencies one by one. Then looking around slightly, he whispered with a strange smile.

“Hey, do you know?”

“What?”

“Hyung-nim who sits over there and has the same name as me is also very conflicted.”

It seemed he was referring to Lee Sejin, the former child actor.

‘Come to think of it, he was the last to return.’

Lee Sejin arrived almost at the same time as the news of Choi Wongil’s departure.

I didn’t pay much attention to it because I wasn’t interested, but, well… Actually, I was still not interested.

Keun Sejin never had any good feelings for Lee Sejin since a long time ago, but he slowly released his true feelings with a smile as if he had become more comfortable with ‘Park Moondae’.

“He was originally from an actor’s agency. Does he really want to change to an idol?”

“That’s possible.”

It looked like he would be eliminated, but if he wanted to continue as an idol, he could have considered transferring.

It seemed difficult to aim for the next team unless he made a debut right away because of his age.

‘It’s up to him to figure it out.’

Keun Sejin shrugged, realizing that I wasn’t interested.

“Is that so?”

It was the end of our spare time.

Then, the shooting for the ranking announcement ceremony began in earnest.

* * *

By the time the participants prepared for the ranking announcement.

Celebrities who made surprise appearances at the <Casting Call> event had already left for another schedule.

The same was true of VTIC, which had their schedules down to minutes once their activities began.

The two people in the van looked at their smartphones and barely spoke until they started ordering lunch.

“Hyung, how was it?”

“It was just business as usual.”

Cheongryeo answered calmly.

“When you met the three of them, did anyone stand out? I like the kids I met.”

“Well.”

PDF by: traitorAIZEN